THE CHRISTIANS Great Intereſt;

Or a ſhort *Booke*

TREATISE, Divided into two Parts:

The Firſt whereof containeth,

The Tryal of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt.

The Second, pointeth forth plainly, *The way how to Attain it*: Wherein ſomewhat is likewiſe ſpoken to the manner of Expreſſe Covenanting with God.

By *W. GUTHRIE*, Miniſter of the Goſpel in *SCOTLAND*.

2 Pet. 1. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, &c.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own ſelves, know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates?*

The Fourth Impreſſion: Wherein the Errata's of the former Impreſſions are amended, and ſeveral words, which founded harſh in the *Engliſh*, are rendered more clear and intelligible.

London, Printed for *Dorman Newman*, at the Chyrurgeons Armes, near the Hoſpitals Gate in *Little Britain*, 1667.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE Stationer TO THE READER.

The Epiſtle Commendatory from a Chriſtian Friend, giving an account of his thoughts upon peruſal of his Book.

Chriſtian Friend,

I Have ſent you by the *Bearer*, this *Book*, which by *Providence* came to *my hand*, and a *Bleſſed Providence* indeed it was to me; for I hope the ſame *mer-*

cy that brought it to my hand, hath *brought the ſavour of it to my heart.*

Upon peruſal of it, I find ſuch a *bleſſed and happy conjunction*, betwixt the *Gifts* and the *Graces of the Spirit*, ſuch a *holy and humble Condeſcention* to my plain *capacity*, ſuch a ſerious handling of *ſerious truths*, that the language of my heart upon *peruſal* of it, was ſomewhat like that of the woman of *Canaan*, Joh. 4.29. *Come ſee one that hath told me all that ever I did*, or rather, *all that God hath done in me and for me.* He that hath waded much in the *waters of ſoul-trouble*, may here behold a lively deſcription of the *ſpirit of bondage* in all its *Terrours* and *Troubles*: And he who is got out of theſe, and is *ſuning his ſoul* in the *light of Gods Countenance*, may here behold the

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light ſide of the cloud; I mean the *Spirit of Adoption*, in all its beautifull colours.

The former part of this Book ſets forth the ſoul in a ſtorm, when the Law comes thundering to the Conſcience; the latter leads it into a *calm of ſweet peace and ſerenity*, when the Spirit of God comes to a troubled ſoul, as the Son of God once came to the troubled Sea, with *A peace, be ſtill*, Mark 4. 29. But if it ſhould not be thus, the Believer is here directed to be *willing to want what God is not willing to give*, and to know, *he is wiſe to give when he will, what he will, and how he will:* I find now that *peace is ſown for the Righteous*, *Pſal.* 97. 11. but all do not reap the crop till they come into *Emmanuel's* land, *Iſa.* 8. 8. there

our joy, as well as our light ſhall be clear, and our love perfect.

And if there be any more concerned in this Piece then others, (though it deals forth its bread to all) it's *young Men*, and *young Converts*; the latter may here behold, as in a Map or Mirrour, the ſeverall Providences, and various workings of the bleſſed Spirit, that have all concurred in the bringing them home to God; and may take notice of all the inducements and remora's they met with in the way; that as *Moſes* was to write a *Hiſtory* of the *Children of Iſrael paſſing through the wilderneſs*, Num. 33. 2. ſo doth this Book, with a holy kind of Elegancy, *deſcribe the Spirits* leading the ſoul out of its bewildered eſtate, into the Spiritual *Canaan, never leaving*

ving it till it comes to the Mountain of Spices, Cant. 8. 14. out of Satans gun-shot, where his *habitation shall be a Munition of Rocks*, *Isa.* 33. 16. neither is there one path omitted, so far as I could ever read or gather from my own or others experience; so that it may not be unfitly termed, *A Spiritual day book of all the passages between the Spirit of God, and the soul in its regeneration work*; which is no less profitable then delightful for the believer to be reading over the Records *of Gods love manifested in the Gospel*; what care and cost he took with him, to *recover him out of the Gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*: For tryal brings truth to light, and those things which through many clouds intercepting, may have lost their

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remembrance in the ſoul, are here *clearly diſcovered, that they have been*, although for the preſent the believer cries out, *How is the Gold become dim? How is the fine gold changed?* and the looking over paſt experience, brings a renewed ſavour, and ſpiritual relliſh of thoſe things upon the heart to them, *who have thus taſted that the Lord is good*, at leaſt ſupports the Soul under the want of ſenſible feeling: whileſt it calls to *remembrance the days of old, the years of Gods right hand*: But I have done, and yet methinks I can never write enough of the excellency and utility of this piece; the Lord make it ſo profitable to others, as it hath been to me. To his bleſſing, I leave both you and it, and remain,

Your true Chriſtian Friend, G. B.

TO THE
Reader.

Chriſtian Reader,

Hile the generality of Men, eſpecially in theſe dayes, by their eager purſuit after low and baſe intereſts, have proclaimed as upon the houſe tops, how much they have forgotten to make choice of that better part, which (if choſen) ſhould never be taken from them; I have made an Eſſay, ſuch as it is, in the following Treatiſe, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painfull purſuit, by propoſing the chiefeſt of intereſts, even the Chriſtians Great Intereſt, *to be ſeriouſly pondered, and conſtantly purſued by thee: Thou mayeſt think it ſtrange, to ſee any thing in Print from my Pen; (as indeed it is a ſurprize to my ſelf) But neceſſity hath made me for this once to offer ſo much violence to my own inclination, in regard that ſome, without my knowledge, have lately publiſhed ſome unperfect Notes of a few of my Sermons, moſt confuſedly caſt together, prefixing withall this*

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vain Title (as displeasing to my self, as the publishing of the thing) A Clear Attractive Warming-Beam, &c. *Upon this occasion I was prevailed with to publish this late Piece, wherein I have purposely used a most homely and plain stile, lest otherwayes, (though when I have stretched my self to the utmost, I am below the Judicious and more Understanding) I should be above the reach of the Rude and Ignorant, whose advantage I have mainly, if not onely consulted: I have likewise studied brevity in every thing, so far as I conceived it to be consistent with plainness and perspicuity; knowing that the persons to whom I address my self herein, have neither much money to spend upon Books, nor much time to spare upon Reading. If thou be a Rigid Critick, I know thou mayest meet with several things to carp at, yet assure thy self, that I had not design to offend thee, neither will thy simple approbation satisfie me; It's thy edification I intend, together with the incitement of some others, more expert, and experienced in this Excellent Subject, to handle the same at greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am,*

Thy Servant in the Work

of the Gospel,

W. Guthery.

These, with other Choice Books, are to be sold by Dorman Newman *at the Chyrurgeons Arms in* Little Brittain.

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Flowers.

The Trial of a Saving Intereſt in CHRIST.

Since there be ſo many people living under the ordinances, pretending without ground to a ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and to his favour and ſalvation, as is clear, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *and* 25. 11, 12. *Luke* 13. 24. And ſince many who have good ground of claim to Chriſt, are not eſtabliſhed in the confidence of his favour, but remain in the dark, without comfort, heſitating concerning the reality of godlineſs in themſelves, and ſpeaking little to the commendation of Religion to others, eſpecially in the time of their ſtraits, I ſhall ſpeak a little to two things of greateſt concernment. The one is, *How a perſon ſhall know if he hath a true and ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and whether he doth lay juſt claim to Gods favour and ſalvation?* The other is, *In caſe a perſon fall ſhort in the foreſaid tryal, what courſe he ſhall take for making ſure Gods friendſhip and ſalvation to himſelf?*

Queſt. 1. *How ſhall a man know if he hath a true*

and ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and whether he hath or may lay claim juſtly to Gods favour and ſalvation?

Anſw. Before we ſpeak directly to the Queſtion, we ſhall premiſe ſome things to make way for the Anſwer: As, 1. That a mans intereſt in Chriſt, or gracious ſtate, may be known, and that with more certainty then people do conjecture; yea, and the knowledg of it may be more eaſily attained unto then many do imagine: For, not only hath the Lord commanded men to know their intereſt in him, as a thing attainable, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. But many of the Saints have attained unto the clear perſwaſion of their intereſt in Chriſt, and in God, as their own God; How often do they call him their God and their portion; and how perſwaded is *Paul*, that nothing can ſeparate him from the love of God? *Rom.* 8.38,39. Therefore the knowledge of a mans gracious ſtate is attainable; and this knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is moſt ſure: *Doubtleſſe thou art our Father*, ſaith the Prophet in name of the Church *Iſa.* 23.16. It is clear thus; 1. That can be no fancy, but a very ſure knowledg, which doth yeeld to a rational man comfort in moſt real ſtraits: But ſo doth this, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. when the people ſpake of ſtoning *David*, he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God. *Pſal.* 2. 6. he ſaith there, *he will not be afraid of ten thouſand that riſe againſt him.* Compare theſe words with ver. 3. of that Pſalm, *Pſa.* 27. 1,3. *Although an hoſt encamp*

camp againſt him, he is confident in this. 2. That is a ſure knowledge of a thing, which maketh a wiſe Merchant ſell all he hath that he may keep it ſure; that maketh a man forgo children, lands, life, and ſuffer the ſpoyling of all joyfully: But ſo doth this *Mat.*13.44. *Mar.*10.28,29. *Heb.*10.34. *Rom.* 5.3. *Act.*5.41. 3. That muſt be a ſure and certain knowledge, and no fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his ſoul, when he is ſtepping into eternity with this word in his mouth, *This is all my deſire.* But ſuch a knowledge is this, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. And again, Not only may a godly man come to the ſure knowledge of his gracious ſtate, but it is more eaſily attainable than many do apprehend: for (ſuppoſing what ſhall be afterwards proved, that a man may know the gracious work of Gods Spirit in himſelf) if he will but argue rationally from thence he ſhall be forced to conclude his intereſt in Chriſt, unleſs he deny clear Scripture truths. I ſhall only make uſe of one here, becauſe we are to ſpeak more directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus: whoſoever receive Chriſt, are juſtly reputed the Children of God, *Joh.* 1. 12. But I have received Chriſt all the wayes which the Word there can import; for, I pleaſe the device of ſalvation by Chriſt, I agree to the terms; I welcome the offer of Chriſt in all his offices, as a King, to rule over me, a Prieſt to offer and intercede for me, as a Prophet to teach me; I lay out my heart

for Him and toward Him, reſting on Him as I am able; what elſe can be meant by the word *receiving*? Therefore may I ſay and conclude plainly and warrantably, I am juſtly to reckon my ſelf Gods childe according to the foreſaid Scripture, which cannot fail.

The ſecond thing to be premiſed, is, That a man be ſavingly in Covenant with God, is a matter of higheſt importance; it is his life, *Deut.* 32.47. and yet very few have or ſeek after a ſaving intereſt in the Covenant; and many fooliſhly think they have ſuch a thing without any ſolid ground, *Mat.* 7.14. few find or walk in the narrow way. This ſhould alarm people to be ſerious about the matter, ſince it is of ſo great conſequence to be in Chriſt, and ſince there be but few that may lay juſt claim to him, and yet many do fooliſhly fancy an intereſt in him, who are deceived by a falſe confidence, as the fooliſh Virgins do, *Mat.* 25.

The third thing to be premiſed, is, Men muſt reſolve to be determined by Scripture, in this matter of their intereſt in Chriſt. The Spirit ſpeaking in the Scripture, is judge of al Controverſies (*Iſa.* 8.20. *To the law and the Prophets; and if it ſpeak not according to theſe, there is no truth in it*) and of this alſo, whether a man be ſavingly in Covenant with God, or not. Therefore do not mock God whilſt you ſeem to ſearch after ſuch a thing. If we prove from Scripture (which is the uncontroverted rule) that you are gracious, and have ſtricken

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Covenant savingly with God, then resolve to grant so much as to acquiesce in it: and if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the controversie; else you do but mock the Lord, and so your bonds shall be made strong, *Isa.* 28. 22. for, a jot of his Word cannot fail, *Mat.* 5. 18. Therefore seek eye-salve from Christ to judge of things, according as the word of God shall discover them to be,

The fourth thing to be premised, is, although the matter of a mans interest in Christ be of so great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it, so plainly held forth in the Scriptures, yet there be but few who reach the distinct knowledge of it; And that this may not discourage any person from attempting it, I shall hint some few reasons, why so few come to the clear knowledg of it, which will also prepare the way for what is to be spoken afterwards.

The first thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their interest in Christ, is, their ignorance of some special principles of Religion: as, 1. That it was free love in Gods bosome, and nothing in man, that moved him to send a Saviour to perfect the work of Redemption. *Joh.* 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he sent &c.* Men are still seeking some ground for that business in themselves, which leads away from suitable and high apprehensions of the first spring and rise of Gods Covenant-favour to his people, which hath

no reaſon, cauſe, or motive in us; and ſo they cannot come to the knowledge of their intereſt. 2. They are ignorant how that love doth effectually diſcover it ſelf to a mans heart, ſo as he hath ground to lay claim to it, *viz.* That ordinarily it doth firſt diſcover his broken ſtate in himſelf becauſe of ſin and corruption defiling the whole man, and any thing in him that might be called a righteouſneſs; all theſe things are loſs and dung, *Phil.* 3. 6, 7. Secondly, It diſcovereth Chriſt as the full and ſatisfying treaſure above all things. The man finds a treaſure, for which, with joy, he ſelleth all, &c. *Mat.* 13. 44, 46. Thirdly, it determineth the heart, and cauſeth it to approach unto a living God in the ordinances, *Pſal.* 65. 4. and cauſeth the heart to lay wait upon him, and him alone, *Pſal.* 62. 5. *My ſoul, wait thou only upon God.* Thus, having dropped in the ſeed of God in the heart, and formed Chriſt there, *Gal.* 4. 19. the heart is changed and made new in the foreſaid work, *Ezek.* 36. 26. and Gods Law is ſo ſtamped upon the heart in that change, *Jer.* 31. 33. that the whole yoke of Chriſt is commended to the man without exception, *Rom.* 7. 12, 16. The law is acknowledged good, holy, juſt and ſpiritual: upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out acts of a new life, (*Gal.* 5. 6. *Faith worketh by love*, Rom. 6. 18, 22. and the man becometh a ſervant of righteouſneſs and unto God) which doth eſpecially appear in the ſpirituality of worſhip, (*Joh.* 4. 24.

Rom.

*Rom.*7.6. men then ſerve God in ſpirit and truth, and in the newneſs of the ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter) and tenderneſs in all manner of converſation; The man then exerciſeth himſelf how to keep a conſcience voyd of offence, &c. *Act* 24. 16. Now, this way doth the love of God diſcover it ſelf unto man and acteth on him, ſo as he hath ground of laying ſome good claim to it; ſo as he may juſtly think, that the love which ſent a Saviour, had reſpect to ſuch a man as hath found theſe things made out unto him. Surely, Ignorance of this doth hinder many from the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt; for, if a man know not how God worketh with a perſon, ſo as he may juſtly lay claim to his love, which was from eternity, he will wander in the dark, and not come to the knowledge of an intereſt in him. 3. Many are alſo ignorant of this, That God alone is the hope of his people: he is called *the hope of Iſrael*, *Jer.* 14. 8. Although inherent qualifications are evidences of it, yet the ſtaying of the heart upon him as a full bleſſing and ſatisfying portion, is faith (1 Pet. 1. 21. the faith and hope muſt be in God) and the only proper condition which giveth right to the ſaving bleſſings of the Covenant, *Rom.* 4. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth, faith is imputed for righteouſneſs.* Indeed if any perſon take liberty here, and turn grace into wantonneſs, there is, without doubt, in ſo far a deluſion; Since there is mercy with him, upon condition, that it conciliate fear

to him, *Psal.* 130. 14. Yea, hardly can any man, who hath found the foresaid expressions of Gods love made out upon him, make a cloke of the Covenant for sinful liberty without some measure of a Spiritual conflict: In this respect he that is born of God, doth not sin; and he who doth so sin, hath not seen God, 1 *Joh.* 3. 6, 9. I say, God is the hope of his people, and not their own holiness. If they intend honestly, and long seriously to be like unto him, many failings should not weaken their hope and confidence: for, it is in him who changeth not, *Mal.* 3. 6. *And if any man sinneth, he hath an Advocate,* 1 Joh. 2. 1. Now, when men place their hope in any other thing beside the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a staggering condition, according to the changes of the thing which they make the ground of their hope, since they give not to God the glory due to his Name, and which he will not give unto another: compare, *Psal.* 9. 10. (*They who know thy Name, will put their trust in thee*) with *Isa.* 42. 9. *My glory will I not give to another: I am the Lord, that is my Name.* 4. Many are ignorant of the different wayes and degrees of Gods working with his people, and it doth much darken their knowledge and reflex acts of their interest in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads. (1.) They are ignorant of the different degrees and wayes of that Law-work which ordinarily dealeth with men, and of the different

different way how the Lord bringeth home people at firſt to Chriſt. They conſider not that the Jaylor is not kept an hour in bondage, *Acts* 16. *Paul* is kept in ſuſpence three dayes, *Acts* 9. *Zacheus* not one moment, *Luke* 19. (2.) They are ignorant of, or at leaſt do not conſider, how different the degrees of Sanctification are in the Saints, and the honourable appearings thereof before men, in ſome, and the ſad blemiſhing thereof in others: Some are very blameleſſe, and more free of groſs outbreakings, adorning their profeſſion much, as *Job*, *Job.* 1. and *Zacharias*, *Luke* 1. Theſe are ſaid to be perfect, walking in all the Commandements of God. Others were ſubject to very groſs and ſad evils, as *Solomon*, *Aſa*, *&c.* (3.) They are ignorant of the different communications of Gods face, and expreſſion of his preſence. Some do walk much in the Light of Gods countenance, and are much in ſenſible fellowſhip with Him, as *David* was; others are all their dayes kept in bondage through fear of death, *Heb.* 2. 25. Surely the ignorance of the different wayes of God's working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the knowledge of their intereſt in him, whilſt they uſually ſtint the Lord to one way of working, which he doth not keep, as we have ſhewed in the former examples.

The ſecond thing which doth darken men about their intereſt in Chriſt, is, There is one thing

thing or other, wherein their heart in ſome reſpect, doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guilfully with God. It is not to be expected, that theſe can come to clearneſs about their intereſt, whoſe heart doth condemn them for keeping up ſome known trangreſſion againſt the Lord, which they will not let go, neither are uſing the means which they know to be appointed by God for delivering them from it; neither can theſe come to clearneſs, who know ſome poſitive duty commanded them in their ſtations, which they deceitfully ſhift and ſhun, not cloſing chearfully with it, or not willingly to be led into it: Theſe are alſo, in ſome reſpect, condemned of their own heart, as the former ſort; and in that caſe it is difficult to come to a diſtinct knowledge of their ſtate. 1 *Joh.* 3. 21. it is ſuppoſed there, that a ſelf-condemning heart maketh void a mans confidence proportionally before God. I do not deny but that men may, on good grounds, plead an intereſt in Chriſt, in the caſe of prevaling iniquity, *Pſal.* 65. 3. *Rom.* 7. 23, 25. but it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is dealing deceitfully and entertaining known guile in a particular: Therefore let people clear themſelves of the particular which they know too well. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and acceſs in all their approaches unto God. See *Judg.* 10. 10, 13. The adolatries of the people

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are caſt up to them by the Lord, and their ſuit rejected thereupon. That which draweth away the heart firſt in the morning, and laſt at night; like an oven heated at night, and it burneth as a flaming fire in the morning, ſpoken of the wicked, Hoſ. 7. 6. And taketh up their thoughts often on their bed, as it is ſaid of ſome, Pſal. 36. 4. That which doth lead away the heart in time of religious duty ordinarily, and the remembrance of which hath power to enliven and quicken the Spirits, more than the remembrance of God, ſo as their heart is after the heart of ſome deteſtable thing. *Ezek.* 11. 21. That which withſtandeth men when they would gripe the Promiſe, as God caſteth up mens ſins to them who are medling with his Covenant, *Pſal.* 50. 16, 17. That is the thing which doth marr the knowledge of a gracious ſtate; let it go, and it will be more eaſie to reach the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt,

The third thing which hindereth the knowledg of an intereſt in Chriſt, is a ſpirit of ſloth and careleſs negligence in many: They complain that they know not whether they be in Chriſt or not; but, as few take pains to be in him, ſo few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and buſineſs which cannot be done ſleeping, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. The ſeveral words uſed there, *viz. examine, prove, know* -- ſay that there is a labour in it; diligence muſt be uſed to make our calling and election ſure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. it is a buſineſs above fleſh and blood;

blood; The holy anointing, which teacheth all things, muſt make us know the things Freely given us of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. Shall the Lord impart a buſineſſe of ſo great concernment, and not ſo much as be enquired after to do it for men? *Ezek.* 36. 37. Be aſhamed you who ſpend ſo much time in reading of Romances, in adorning your perſons, in hawking, and hunting, in conſulting the Law, concerning your outward ſtate in the World, and it may be, in worſe things than theſe: Be aſhamed that you ſpend ſo little time in the ſearch of this, whether you be an heir of glory or not; whether you be in the way that leadeth to Heaven, or that which will land you in darkneſs for ever. You who judge this below you, and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time, it is like in Gods account, you have judged your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, ſo as you have no lot with Gods people in this matter.

The fourth thing that doth darken the knowledge of intereſt in Chriſt, is, men do not condeſcend upon what would ſatisfie them; but complain that God will not ſhew unto them what he is about to do with them; but cannot yet ſay they know what would ſatisfie concerning his purpoſe: this is a ſad thing. Shall we think thoſe are ſerious, who have never, as yet, pitched on what would ſatisfie them, nor are making earneſt enquiry after what ſhould ſatisfie? If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter, we were leſſe in-

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excuſable: but ſince the grounds of ſatisfaction and the true marks of intereſt in Chriſt, are ſo clear and frequent in Scripture, and ſo many things written that our joy may be full, 1 *John* 1. 4. and that thoſe who believe may know that they have eternal life, 1 *John* 5. 13. and ſince he that believeth hath a Witneſs of it in himſelfe, 1 *John* 5. 10. none can pretend excuſe here: we may not here inſiſt to ſhew what may and ſhould ſatisfie concerning our intereſt, ſince we are to ſpeak directly to it afterwards.

The fifth thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark, concerning their intereſt in Chriſt, is, they pitch upon ſome mutable grounds which are not ſo appoſite proofs of the truth of an intereſt in Chriſt, as of the comfortable ſtate of a triumphing ſoul ſailing before the wind, and marks, which I grant are precious in themſelves, and do make out an intereſt clearly where they are; Yet they are ſuch, as without an intereſt in Chriſt may be, and be known alſo in a good meaſure; We ſhall touch a few of them. 1. Some think that all who have a true intereſt in him are above the prevaling power of every ſin. But this is contrary to that of *Pſal.* 65 3. where we find that holy man laying juſt claim to pardon, in the caſe of prevailing iniquity; and that of *Rom.* 7. 23, 24, 25. where *Paul* thanketh God through Chriſt, as freed from the condemnation of the Law, even whilſt a law in his *members* leads him captive unto ſin. 2. Some think

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that all true Saints have constantly access unto God in prayer, and sensible returns of prayer at all times. But this is contrary to the many sad exercises of his people, complaining often, that they are not heard nor regarded of God. *Psal.* 13. 1. *and* 22. 1, 2, 3. Some think, that all who have any true interest in him, have God witnessing the same unto them by a high operation of that witnessing spirit of his, spoken of *Romans* 8. 16. (whereof afterwards) and so they still suspect their own interest in Christ, because of the want of this. But they do not remember that they must first beleive, and give credit to that record, which God hath given to the Son, that there is life enough in him for men, 1 *John* 5. 10, 11. and then look for the seal and witness of the spirit, *Eph.* 1. 13. *In whom after ye believed ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, &c.* As long as people hold fast these principles and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious state, which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themselves, otherwayes then by the foresaid things.

The fifth thing to be premised, is, The removal of some mistakes, whereunto people may readily run themselves, when we are about to prove their interest in Christ. As, 1. It is a mistake to think, that every one who is in Christ, doth know that he is in Him: For many are truely gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know

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ſo much, untill it be made out afterwards, 1 *John* 5. 13. Theſe things are written to believers, that they may know they have a true title to eternal life; that is, that they may know they are believers, and ſo it is ſuppoſed they knew it not before. 2. It is a miſtake to think, that all who come to the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt, do attain an equal certainty about the ſame: One may ſay, he is perſwaded, nothing preſent or to come, can ſeperate him from the love of God, *Rom.* 8. 38. Another cometh but this length, *I beleive, help mine unbelief*, *Mar.* 9. 24. 3. It is a miſtake to think that every one who attaineth a ſtrong perſwaſion of his intereſt, doth alwayes hold there; for he who to day may ſay of the Lord, *He is his refuge*, Pſal. 21. 2. and *his portion*, *Pſal.* 119. 57. will at another time ſay, *he is cut off*, Pſal. 31. 22. and will ask, if the truth of Gods promiſe *doth fail for evermore*? Pſa. 77. 7, 8, 9. 4. It is alſo a miſtake to think, that every one who doth attain a good knowledge of their gracious ſtate, can formally anſwer all objections made to the contrary; But yet they may hold faſt the concluſion, and ſay, *I know whom I have beleived*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. There be few grounds of Chriſtian Religion, whereof many people are ſo perſwaded, as that they are able to maintain them formally againſt all arguments brought to the contrary, and yet they may and will hold the concluſion ſtedfaſtly and juſtly: So it is in this caſe in hand. It is

no leſs a miſtake to imagine, that the vain, groundleſs confidence which many prophane, ignorant Atheiſts do maintain, is this knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt which we plead for; Many do falſly avow him to be their Father, *John* 8. 41. and many look for Heaven, who will be beguiled with thoſe fooliſh Virgins, *Mat.* 25. 12. Yet we muſt not think becauſe of this, that all knowledge of intereſt is a deluſion and fancy, although theſe fooles be deceived: for whilſt thouſands are deluded, ſome can ſay on good and ſolid grounds, *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedneſs*, 1 John 5. 19.

Having premiſed theſe things, it now followeth, that we give ſome marks by which a man may know if he be ſavingly in Covenant with God, and hath a ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, ſo as he may warrantably lay claim to Gods favour and ſalvation. We ſhall only pitch upon two great and principal marks, not willing to trouble people with many. And before we fall upon theſe, we will ſpeak of a preparatory work of the Law, whereof the Lord doth ordinarily make uſe, to prepare his own way in mens ſouls. This may have its own weight, as a mark, with ſome perſons. It is called the work of the Law, or, the work of humiliation. It hath ſome proportion to that ſpirit of bondage, *Rom*, 8. 15. and doth now under the New Teſtament anſwer unto it, and uſually leadeth on to the Spirit of adoption. Only here

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let it be remembred, 1. That we are not to speak of this preparatory work of the Law, as a negative mark of true interest in Christ, as if none might lay claim to Gods favour, who hath not had this preparatory work in the several steps of it, as we are to speak of it; for, as we shall hear, the Lord doth not alwayes keep that path with men. 2. The great reason why we speak of it, is, because the Lord dealeth with many (whom he doth effectually call) by some such preparatory work. And to those, who have been so dealt with, it may prove strengthning, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the marks which follow. 3. It may help to encourage others, who are under such bondage of spirit, as a good prognostick of a gracious work to follow: for, as we shall circumstantiate it, it will be rarely found to miscarry, and fail of a gracious issue. 4. Where God useth such a preparatory work, he doth not keep one way or measure in it, as we shall hear.

For the more distinct handling of this preparatory work, we shall shortly hint the most ordinary wayes, by which the Lord leadeth people in into the Covenant savingly, and draweth them unto Christ.

First, There are some called from the womb, as *John* the Baptist was, *Luke* 1. 41, 44. or, in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satans ways, *2 Tim.* 3. 15

It cannot be ſuppoſed that thoſe have ſuch a preparatory work as we are to ſpeak of. And, becauſe ſome perſons may pretend to this way of effectual calling, we offer theſe marks of it, whereby thoſe who have been ſo called may be confirmed. 1. Such uſe from their childhood to be kept free of ordinary pollutions, wherewith children uſually are defiled; as ſwearing, lying, mocking of Religion and religious perſons, *&c.* Thoſe whom God calleth effectually, he ſanctifieth them from the time of that effectual calling: Sin cannot have dominion over them as over others, becauſe they are under grace, *Rom.* 6. 14. (2.) Religion is, as it were, natural to them; I mean, they need not be much preſſed to religious duties, even when they are but children; They willingly run that way, becauſe there is an inward principle of love conſtraining them, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. ſo as they yield themſelves ſervants of righteouſneſſe, without outward conſtraint, *Rom.* 6. 16. (3.) Although ſuch know not when they were firſt acquainted with God, yet afterwards they have ſuch exerciſes of ſpirit befalling, as the Saints in Scripture (of whoſe firſt converſion we hear not) do ſpeak of. They are ſhut out from God upon ſome ſome occaſion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again, (to their apprehenſion.) Their heart is alſo further broken up by the ordinances, as is ſaid of *Lidya*, Act. 16. 14 and ordinarily they do remember, when ſome

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special bit of Religion and Duty, or when some sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them. They who can apply these things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly, Some are brought into Christ in a soveraign Gospel-way: when the Lord, by some few words of love swallowing up any Law work, quickly taketh a person prisoner at the first, as he did *Zacheus*, *Luke* 19. and others, who upon a word spoken by Christ did leave all and follow him; and we hear no noise of a Law-work dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus. And because some pretend to this way of calling, we shall touch some things most remarkable in that transaction with *Zacheus*, for clearing and confirmation. 1. He had some desire to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him wave that which some would have judged prudence and discretion, whilst he climbeth up upon a tree that he might see him. 2. Christ spake to his heart, and that word took such hold upon him, that presently with joy he did accept of Christ's offer, and closed with Christ as Lord, whilst few of any note were following him. 3. Upon this his heart did open to the poor, although it seems, he was a covetous man before. 4. He had a due impression of his former wayes, evidencing his respect to *Moses* his Law, and this he did signifie before all the company then present, not caring to shame

himself in such things as (probably) were notour to the World. 5. Upon all these things, Christ confirmeth and ratifieth the bargain by his word, recommending to him that oneness of interest, which believed to be between him and the Saints, and the thoughts of his own lost condition, if Christ had not come and sought him, and found him: All which are clear, *Luke* 19. 3, —— 10. We grant, the Lord calleth some so; and if any can lay claim to the special things we have now hinted, they have a good confirmation of Gods dealing with them from that Scripture; Neither are they to vex themselves because of the want of a distinct preparatory Law-work, if their heart have yielded unto Christ. For, a Law-work is not desirable, except for this end. Therefore Christ doth offer himself directly in the Scripture, and people are invited to come to him: and although many will not come to him, who is the surety, untill the spirit of bondage distresse them for their debt; yet if any upon the knowledge of their lost estate, would flee and yield to Christ, none might warrantably presse a law-work upon them. As for others, whom Christ perswaded by a word to follow him, whatsoever he did, or howsoever he spake to them at his first meeting with them, we must rationally suppose, that then he discovered so much of their own necessity, and his own fulness and excellency to them, as made them quit all, and run after him. And if he do so to any,

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we crave no more, since there is room enough there for the Physician. So that from all this, as some may be confirmed and strengthned, with whom God hath so dealt; So there is no ground nor occasion for deluded souls to flatter themselves in their condition, who remain ignorant and senseless of their own miseries and Christs all-sufficiency, and hold fast deceit.

Thirdly, there are some brought in to Christ in a way yet more declarative of his free grace, and this is, when he effectually calleth men at the hour of death. We find somewhat recorded of this way in that pregnant example of the Thief on the Cross, *Luk.* 23. 39, 41. Although this seems not very pertinent for the purpose in hand; yet we shall speak a little of it, that on the one hand men may be sparing to judge and pass Sentence upon either themselves or others, before the last breath. And we shall so circumstantiate it, that, on the other hand, none may dare to delay so great a business to the last hour of their life. We find these things remarkable in that business between Christ and the Thief; 1. The man falleth at odds with his former Companion. 2. He dareth not speak a wrong Word of God, whose hand is on him, but justifieth him in all that is befallen him. 3. He now seeth Jesus Christ persecuted by the World, without a cause, and most injuriously. 4. He discovereth Christ to be a Lord and a King, whilst enemies seem to have him at under. 5. He be-

beleiveth a being of glory after death so really, that he preferreth a portion of it to the present safety of his bodily life, which he knew Christ was able to grant to him at that time, and he might have chosen that with the other Theif. 6. Although he was much abased in himselfe, and so humbled, that he pleaded but that Christ would remember him; yet he was nobly daring to throw himself upon the Covenant, on life and death; and he had so much faith of Christs all-sufficiency, that he judged a simple remembrance from Christ, would satisfyingly do his business. 7. He acquiesced sweetly in the word which Christ spake to him, for the ground of his comfort. All which are very clear in the case of that poor dying man, and do prove a very real work of God upon his heart. As this example may encourage some to wait for good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear claim to any gracious work of his Spirit: So we obtest all, as they love their souls, not to delay their soul-business, hoping for such a cast of Christs hand in the end, as too many do: This being a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honourably tryumph over the ignominy of his crosse; a parallel of which we shall hardly find in all the Scripture beside. Yea, as there be but few at all saved, *Mat.* 20. 16. and most few saved this way: So the Lord hath peremptorily threatned to laugh at the calamity, and not to hear the cry of such as

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mocked formerly at his reproof, and would not hear when he called to them, *Pro.* 1. 24, 26 which Scripture, although it doth not shut mercies door upon any, who at the hour of death, do sincerely judge themselves and flee from Christ as this penitent Thief did: Yet it is certain, it implyeth that very few who sit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance, as he was, and so their cry, as not being sincere and of the right stamp, shall not be heard.

The fourth, and most ordinary way, by which many are brought in to Christ, is, by a clear and discernable work of the law and humiliation, which we ordinarily call the *spirit of bondage*, as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one whose conscience is awakened with sin and fear of wrath, doth really close with Christ; the contrary doth appear in *Cain, Saul, Judas, &c.* But that wherein there is a conviction of sin, a wakening of conscience, and work of humiliation, which, as we shall circumstantiate it, doth rarely miscarry or fail of a gracious issue, but ordinarily doth resolve into the spirit of adoption, and a gracious work of Gods Spirit. And because the Lord dealeth with many sinners this way, and we find that many are much puzled about the giving judgment of this Law-work.

This work is either more violent and suddenly expede, or it is more sober and lent, protracted through a great length of time, and so as the steps of it are very discernable. It is more violent in

ſome, as in the *Jaylor*, *Paul*, and ſome other converts in the book of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, on whom Chriſt did break in at an inſtant, and fell on them as with Fire and Sword, and led them captive terribly; And becauſe ſome great legal ſhakings are deceitfull, and turn to nothing, if not worſe, we ſhall point at ſome things remarkable in theſe converts, ſpoken of before, which did prove the work of the Law on them, to have had a gracious iſſue and reſult. 1. Some word of truth or diſpenſation, putteth the perſon to a dreadfull ſtand, with a great ſtir in the Soul: Some are pricked in heart, *Acts* 2. 27. Some fell on trembling, *Acts* 16. 29. and this is ſuch a ſtir, that the perſon is brought to his wits end. *What wilt thou have me to do?* ſaith *Paul*, Acts 9. *What ſhall I do?* ſaith the *Jaylor*, Acts 16. 30. 2. The perſon is content to have Salvation, and Gods friendſhip on any terms, as the queſtions do import, *What ſhall I do?* as if he had ſaid, What would I not do? what would I not forego? what would I not undergo? 3. The perſon accepteth the condition offered by Chriſt and his Servants, as is clear in the fore-cited Scriptures. 4. The perſon preſently becometh of one intereſt with the Saints, joyning himſelf with that perſecuted ſociety, putting reſpect on thoſe whom he had formerly perſecuted, joyning and continuing with them in the profeſſion of Chriſt on all hazards. Thoſe with whom the Lord hath ſo dealt,

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have much to ſay for a gracious work of Gods ſpirit in them; and it is like many of them can date their work from ſuch a particular time and word, or diſpenſation, and can give ſome account of what paſt between God and them, and of a ſenſible change following in them from that time forward, as *Paul* giveth a good account of the work and way of God with him afterwards, *Acts* 22.

Again, the Lord ſometimes carrieth on this work more calmly, ſoftly and gently, protracting it ſo as the ſteps of mens exerciſe under it are very diſcernable. It would draw a great length to enlarge every ſtep of it; we ſhall touch the moſt obſervable things in it.

1. The Lord layeth ſiege to men (who, it may be, have often refuſed to yield to him, offering himſelf in the Ordinances) and by ſome word Preached, Read, or born in on the mind, or by ſome providence leading in unto the Word, he doth alſo aſſault the houſe kept peaceably by the ſtrong man, the Devil; and thus Chriſt, who is the ſtronger man, cometh upon him, *Luke* 11. 22. and by the Spirit of truth, doth faſten the *Word* on the man, in which Gods curſe is denounced againſt ſuch and ſuch ſinners, whereof the man knoweth himſelf guilty. The ſpirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the ſame perſon againſt whom the Word of God doth ſpeak, becauſe he is guilty of ſuch ſins, and from ſuch ſins the man is led on to ſee more, until

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ordinarily) he comes to ſee the ſins of his youth, ſins of omiſſion, &c. yea, he is led on untill he ſees himſelf guilty almoſt of the breach of the whole Law; he ſeeth innumerable evils compaſſing him, as *David* ſpeaketh in a fit of exerciſe, *Iſa.* 40.12. A man ſometimes will ſee ugly ſights of ſin in this caſe, and is ſharp-ſighted to reckon a filthineſs to every ſin almoſt. Thus the ſpirit convinceth of ſin, *Jo.*16.8. 2. The Lord ſhaketh a ſpecial ſtrong hold in the gariſon, a refuge of lies, to which the man betaketh himſelf when his ſins are thus diſcovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Chriſt, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the *Phariſees* ſaid, *Jon.* 8. 41. *We have one Father, even God.* They pretend to a ſpecial relation of God as a common Lord. The Spirit of God beats the man from this, by the truth of the Scriptures, proving that he hath no true faith, and ſo no intereſt in Chriſt, nor any true ſaving grace; ſhewing clear differences between true grace and the counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him; and between him, and the truly godly, as Chriſt laboureth to do thoſe, *Joh.* 8. 42, 44. *If God were your father, ye would love me. Ye are of the Devil, for ye do the luſts of ſuch a father.* So, *fear ſurpriſeth the Hypocrite in heart*, Iſa. 33. 14. eſpecially when the Lord diſcovereth to him conditions in many of theſe promiſes (wherein he truſted moſt) not eaſily attainable, he now ſeeth grace and faith another thing then once he judged them to be.

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We may in some respect, apply that word here, *The Spirit convinceth him of sin, because he hath not believed on the Son*: he is particularly convinced of unbeleif, *John* 16. 9. he seeth now a huge distance between himself and the godly, whom he thought before out-striped him onely in some unnecessary, proud, hateful precisenes; he now seeth himself deluded, and in the broad way with the perishing multitude; and so in this sight of his misery, coucheth down under his own burthen, which, before this time, he thought Christ did bear for him; he now beginneth to scare at the Promises, because of that and such other words, *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant in thy mouth? &c.* Psal. 50. 16.

3. The man becometh careful about his salvation, and beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing necessary: he is brought to this with the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. *What shall I do to be saved?* His salvation becometh the leading thing with him: It was least in his thoughts before, but now it prevaileth, and other things are much misregarded by him, since his soul is ready to perish, *What shall it profit him to gain the whole World if he lose his soul?* Mat. 16. 26. Some here are much puzled with thoughts of an irrecoverable decree to their prejudice, and with the feares of uncertain death, which may attach them before they get matters put to a point; and some are vexed with apprehensions, that they are guilty of the sin against

againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is unpardonable, and ſo are driven a dangerous length, Satan ſtill caſting up to them many ſad examples of people, who have dolefully put an end to their own exerciſe: but they are in the hand of one, who knoweth how to ſuccour them that are tempted, *Heb.* 2. 18.

4. When a man is thus in hazzard of miſcarrying, the Lord uſeth a work of preventing mercy towards him, quietly, and under-hand ſupporting him; and this is by bearing upon his mind the poſſibility of his Salvation, leading the man to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of Gods free and rich grace, pardoning groſſe tranſgreſſors, ſuch as *Manaſſeth*, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correſpondence with the Devil, and yet obtained mercy, 2 *Chron.* 33. 12, 13. and other Scriptures bearing offers of grace and favour indifferently to all who will yield to Chriſt, whatſoever they have been formerly; So as the man is brought again to this, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* which doth ſuppoſe, that he apprehendeth a poſſibility of being ſaved, elſe he would not propound the queſtion. He applyeth that, or the like word, to himſelf, *It may be, ye ſhall be hid*, Zeph. 2. 3. he findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Although here it may be, the man doth not perceive that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterwards he can tell, that when his

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foot was slipping, Gods mercy held him up, as *Psal.* 94. 17, 18. the Psalmist speaketh in another case. And he will afterwards say, *When he was as a Beast, and as a fool in many respects, God held him by the hand*, Psal. 73. 22, 23.

5. After this discovery of a possibility to be saved, there is a work of desire quickened in the Soul; which is clear in that same expression, *What shall I do to be saved?* But sometimes this desire is attired amiss, whilst it goeth out thus, what shall I do that I may work the works of God? *Joh.* 6. 28. In which case, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his Salvation, would be at some work of his own, to extricate himself; And here he suddenly resolveth to do all that is commanded, and to forego every evil way (yet much slighting Christ Jesus) and so beginneth to take some courage to himself again, establishing his own righteousness, but not submitting to the Righteousness of God, *Rom.* 10. 3. whereupon the Lord maketh a new assault on him, intending the discovery of his absolutely broken state in himself, that so room might be made for the Surety; as *Joshua* did to the people, when he found them so bold in their undertakings, *Josh.* 24. 18, 19. *You cannot serve the Lord.* saith he, *for he is a Holy God, &c.* In this new assault, the Lord, 1. Bends up against the man, the spirituality of the Law, the Commandement cometh with a new change in the spiritual meaning

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of it, *Rom.* 7. 9. *The Law came* (saith *Paul*) *viz.* in the spiritual meaning of it. *Paul* had never seen such a sight of the Law before. 2. God mostholily doth loose the restraining bonds, which he had laid upon the mans corruption, and suffereth it not onely to boyl and swell within, but to threaten, to break out in all the outward members. Thus sin groweth bold, and kicketh at the law becoming exceeding sinful, *Rom.* 7. 8, 9, 13. 3. The Lord doth discover to man, more now then ever before, the uncleanness of his righteousness, and what spots are in his best things. These things kill the man, and he dieth in his own conceit, *Rom.* 7. 9. and despareth of relief in himself, if it come not from some otherway.

6. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily the man resolveth some retirement, he desireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before, like those who in a besieged City, when they see they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition for the besieging enemy, they go to a council, that they may resolve somewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may speak with himself. This is like that communing with our own heart, *Psal.* 4. 4. Thus God leadeth to the wilderness, that he may speak to the heart, *Hos.* 2. 14. When the person is retired, the thoughts of the heart which were scattered in former steps of exercise, do more observably throng in here. We shall reduce them into this method. 1. The

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man thinks of his unhappy folly, in bearing arms againſt God; and here there be large thoughts of former ways, with a bluſhing countenance and ſelf-loathing, *Ezek.* 36. 31. like that of *Pſal.* 51. 3. his ſin is before him. 2. Then he remembereth how fair opportunites of yielding to God he hath baſely loſt; his ſpirit is like to faint when he remembereth that, as is ſaid in another caſe, *Pſal.* 42. 4, 5. 3. He now thinks of many Chriſtians, whom he mocked and deſpiſed in his heart, perſwading himſelf now that they are happy, as having choſen the better part; he thinks of the condition of thoſe who wait on Chriſt, as the Q. of *Sheba* did of *Solomons* ſervants: *Happy are thy ſervants* (ſaith ſhe) *who ſtand continually before thee, and that hear thy wiſdom*, 1 Kings 10. 8. *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe, &c.* Pſal. 84. 4. He wiſheth to be one of the meaneſt who have any near relation to God, as the prodigal ſon doth ſpeak, he would be as one of the Fathers hired ſervants, *Luke* 15. 17, 19. 4. Then he calleth to mind the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that teſtimony, *Jonah* 4. 2. The Prophet knew that God was a gracious God and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, &c. The free and large promiſes and offers of grace to come in here; and the glorious practices which have paſt upon ſinners of all ſorts, according to the fame of God in Scripture. 5. He thinks with himſelf, why hath God ſpared me ſo

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long, and why have I got such a sight of my sin? why hath he kept me from breaking prison at my own hand, in choosing some unhappy way of escape? Why hath he made this strange change on me? It may be it is in his heart to do me good; O that it may be so! — Although all these thoughts be not in the preparatory work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promising where they are.

7. Upon all these Thoughts and Meditations, the man more seriously than ever before, resolveth to pray, and to make some essay with God, upon Life and Death; he concludeth, it can be no worse with him: for, if he sit still, he perisheth, as the Lepers speak, 2 *Kings* 7.3,4. He considereth with the pinched Prodigal Son, that there is bread enough in the Fathers House, and to spare, while he perisheth for want: so he goeth to God; for he knoweth not what else to make of his condition, as the Prodigal Son doth, *Luk.* 15. 17,18. and, it may be, here he resolveth what to speak; but readily things do vary when he is araigned before God, as the Prodigal Son forgot some of his premeditated prayers, *Luk.* 15. 18,19,21. And now when he cometh before God more observably than ever before, (1.) he beginneth with the Publicane, a far off, *Luk.* 18. 13. with many through confessions and self-condemnings, whereof he is very Prodigal, as *Luke* 15. 21. *I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy,*

thy, &c. (2.) Now begin his thoughts about the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to queſtion much; he now knows what thoſe expreſſions of the Saints, about the hearing of their prayers, do import. (3.) It is obſervable in this addreſs, that there are many broken Sentences, like that of *Pſal.* 6. 3. (*But thou, O Lord, how long?*) ſupplyed with ſighs and groans, *Rom.* 8. 26. and greedy looking upward, thereby ſpeaking more than can be expreſt by words. (4.) There be ordinarily ſome interruptions, and (as it were) diverſions, the man ſpeaking ſomtimes to the enemy, ſomtimes to his own heart, ſometimes to the multitude in the world, as *David* did in other caſes, *Pſal.* 9. 6. *Pſal.* 42. 5. *Pſal.* 4. 2. (5.) It is obſervable here, that ſomtimes the man will halt and be ſilent to hear ſome in diſtinct whiſpering of a joyful ſound glancing on the mind, or ſome news in ſome broken word of Scripture, which, it may be, the man ſcarcely knoweth to be Scripture, or whether it is come from God or Satan to delude him: yet this he hath reſolved, only to hear what God the Lord will ſpeak, as upon another occaſion, *Pſal.* 85. 8. (6.) More diſtinct promiſes come into the mans mind, whereupon he eſſayeth to lay hold, but is beaten off with objections, as in another caſe the Pſalmiſt is, *Pſal.* 20. 3, 6. *But thou art holy, But I am a Worm.* Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and Faith will ſtir as ſoon as the

Lord imparteth the joyful ſound, *Pſal.* 89. 15. This is the ſubſtance of the Covenant, which may be ſhortly ſummed up in theſe words, *Chriſt Jeſus is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.* We can ſpeak no further of the mans exerciſe as a preparatory work; for, what followeth, is more than preparatory. Yet, that the exerciſe may appear compleat and full, we ſhall add here, That after all theſe things, the Lord (it may be, after many anſwers of divers ſorts), mightily conveyeth the ſound of his Covenant to the heart, and determineth the heart to cloſe with it, and God now draweth him ſo to Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 44. and ſo ſhapeth out the heart for him, that the conception cannot miſcarry; for now the heart is ſo in breadth and length for him, as that leſs cannot ſatisfie, and more is not deſired, like that of *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* or, *whom have I deſired on earth beſides thee?* The ſoul now reſolveth to die, (if he command ſo) yet at his door, and facing to him-wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to ſome length, not tying any man to ſuch a work ſo circumſtantiate; onely, we ſay, the Lord dealeth ſo with ſome; and where he ſo convinceth of ſin, corruption, and ſelf-emptineſs, and maketh a man take ſalvation to the heart, as the one thing neceſſary, and ſets him on work in the uſe of the meanes, which God hath appointed for relief; I ſay

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ſuch a work rarely ſhall be found to fail of a good iſſue and gracious reſult.

Object. *Hypocrites and reprobates have great ſtirrings of Conſcience, and deep convictions about ſin, ſetting them on work ſometimes; and I do ſuſpect any preparatory work of the Law I ever had, to be but ſuch as they have.*

Anſw. It will be hard to give ſure eſſential differences between the preparatory work in thoſe in whom afterwards Chriſt is formed, and thoſe legal ſtirrings which are ſometimes in Reprobates: If there were not ſome gracious reſult of theſe convictions, and wakenings of conſcience in the Lords people, and other marks, (of which we ſhall ſpeak afterwards) it were hard to adventure upon any difference that is clear in theſe legal ſtirrings. Yet, for anſwer to the Objection, I ſhall offer ſome things, which rarely will be found in the ſtirring of reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that Law-work which hath a gracious iſſue. 1. The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates, are uſually confined to ſome few very groſs tranſgreſſions. *Saul grants no more but the perſecuting of* David, 1 *Sam.* 26. 21. Judas *grants only the betraying of innocent blood*, Mat. 27. 4. But uſually thoſe convictions by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the ſoul, although they may begin at one or more groſs particular trangreſſions, yet they fiſt not, but the man is led on to ſee many breaches of the

Law, and innumerable evils compaſſing him, as *David* ſpeaketh in the ſight of his ſin, *Pſal.* 40. 12. and withal, that univerſal conviction (if I may call it ſo) is not general, as uſually we hear ſenſleſs men ſaying that in all things they ſin: But it is particular and condeſcending, as *Paul* afterwards ſpake of himſelf; he not only is the chief of ſinners, but particularly, he was a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. 2. The convictions which hypocrites have, do ſeldome reach their corruption, and that body of death, which breeds an averſneſſe from what is good, and ſtrongly inclineth to what is evil. Ordinarily where we find Hypocrites ſpeaking of themſelves in Scripture, they ſpeak loftily, and with ſome ſelf-conceit, both as to their freedom from corruption. *Joh.* 9. 34. The *Phariſees* ſay to the poor man, *Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us?* (as if they themſelves were not as corrupt by nature as he) They ſpeak of great ſins as *Hazael* did, 2 *Kings* 8. 13. *Am I a Dog that I ſhould do this great thing?* And alſo in their undertakings of duty, as that man ſpake, *Mat.* 8. 19. *I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* See how the people do ſpeak, *Jer.* 42. 2, to 7. They undertake to do all that God will command them. So that they ſtill go about in any caſe to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting unto the righteouſneſs of God. But I may ſay, that convictions and exerciſe about cor-

corruption, and that body of death, inclining to evil, and diſenabling for good, is not the leaſt part of the work, where the Lord is preparing his own way. They uſe to judg themſelves very wretched becauſe of a body of ſin, and are at their wits end how to be delivered, as *Paul* ſpeaketh, when he is under the exerciſe of it afterwards, *Rom.* 7. 19. 3. It will ordinarily be found, that the convictions which are in hypocrites, either are not ſo ſerious, as that ſome other buſineſſe will not put them out of head before any ſatisfaction be gotten, as in *Cain*, who went and built a City, and we hear no more of his convictions, *Gen.* 4. *Felix went away until a more convenient time, and we hear no more of his trembling*, Acts 24: 25. Or, if that work become very ſerious, then it runneth to the other extreamity and deſpare of relief, leaving no room for any eſcape. So we find *Judas* very ſerious in his Convictions, yet he grew deſperate, and hanged himſelf, *Mat.* 27. 4, 5. But where the Lord prepareth his own way, the work is both ſo ſerious, as the perſon cannot be put off it, (untill he find ſome ſatisfaction) and yet under that very ſeriouſneſſe he lyeth open for relief: both which are clear in the Jaylors words, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Acts 16. 30. This ſerious inquiry after relief, is a very obſervable thing in the preparatory work which leadeth on to Chriſt. Yet we deſire none to lay too

much weight on these things, since God hath allowed clearer differences between the precious and the vile.

Object. *I still fear I have not had so through a sight of my sin and misery, as the Lord giveth to many whom he effectually calleth, especially to great transgressors, such as I am.*

Answ. It is true, the Lord discovereth to some, great sights of their sin and misery, and they are thereby put under great legal terrours. But as all are not brought in by that sensible preparatory Law-work, (as we shewed before) So even those who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variously exercised in regard of degrees of terrour, and of continuance of that work: The Jaylor hath a violent work of very short continuance; *Paul* hath a work continuing three days: Some persons are in bondage through fear of death all their days, *Heb.* 2. so that we must not limit the Lord to one way of working here. The main thing we are to look unto in these legal wakenings and convictions of sin and misery, is, If the Lord reach those ends in us, for which usually these stirrings and convictions are sent into the soul; and if those ends be reached, it is well, we are not to vex our selves about any preparatory work further. Now, those ends which God driveth ordinarily with sinners by these legal terrours and wakenings of conscience, are four.

First,

First, The Lord diſcovers ſights of mens ſin and miſery to them, to chaſe them out of themſelves, and to put them out of conceit of their own righteouſneſs. Men naturally have great thoughts of themſelves, and do incline much to the covenant of works. The Lord therefore doth diſcover to them ſo much of their ſin and corruption, even in their beſt things, that they are made to loath themſelves, and to deſpare of relief in themſelves, and ſo they are forced to flee out of themſelves, and from the Covenant of works, to ſeek refuge elſe-where, *Heb.* 6. 18. They become dead to themſelves and the Law, as to the point of juſtification, *Rom.* 7. 4. *Then have they no more confidence in the fleſh*, Phil. 3. 3. This is ſuppoſed in the offers of *Chriſt*, *coming to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*, Luke 19. 10. and *to be a Phyſitian to thoſe who are ſick*, Mat. 9. 12. The ſecond great end, is, to commend Chriſt Jeſus to mens hearts above all things, that ſo they might fall in love with him, and betake themſelves to that treaſure and jewel which onely enricheth, *Mat.* 13. 44. and by ſo doing may ſerve the Lords deſign in the contrivement of the Goſpel, which was the manifeſtation of his free grace through Chriſt Jeſus, in the ſalvation of men. The ſight of a mans own miſery and damnable eſtate by nature, is a ready way to make him prize Chriſt highly, who alone can ſet ſuch a wretch at liberty. Yea, it not onely leadeth a

man to an high eſteem of Chriſt, but alſo of all things that relate to that way of Salvation, as Grace, New-Covenant Faith, &c. and maketh him carefully to gather and treaſure up his *Michtams* or golden Scriptures for the confirmation of his intereſt in theſe things. The third great end, is, To deter and ſcare people from ſin, and to make them fall out with it, and conſent to put their neck under all his yoke. God kindleth ſome ſparkles of Hell in mens boſoms by the diſcovery of their ſin, as a ready mean to make them henceforth ſtand in awe, *knowing how bitter a thing it is to depart from the Lord*, Jer. 2.19. So we find reſt offered to the weary, upon condition they will take on Chriſts yoke, *Mat.*11.29. And God offereth to own men as their God and Father, upon condition they will allow no peaceable abode to *Belial*, 2 *Cor.* 6.14,17,18. The fourth great end, is, to work up men to a patient and thankful ſubmiſſion to all the Maſters pleaſure. This is a ſingular piece of work, *Ezek.* 16. 63. Then ſhalt thou not *open thy mouth any more*. The ſight of a mans own vileneſſe and deſervings, maketh him ſilent, and to lay his hand on his mouth, whatſoever God doth unto him, *Pſal.* 39.9. *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, Ezra 9. 13. *God hath puniſhed us leſs then our iniquities*. Micah 7.9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned*. The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal

deal with him, if he ſave him from the deſerved wrath to come. Alſo, any mercy is a large mercy to him who hath ſeen ſuch a ſight of himſelf, *Gen.* 32. 10. *he is leſs then the leaſt of mercies*, any *crumb falling from his Maſters Table is welcome*, Mat. 15. 27. he thinks it rich mercy that he is not conſumed, *Lam.* 3. 22. This is the thing that marvelouſly maketh his poor croſſed people ſo ſilent under, and ſatisfied with their lot; Nay, they think he deſerveth Hell who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, ſince he hath pardoned his tranſgreſſions. So then, for ſatisfying the Objection, I ſay, if the Lord hath driven thee out of thy ſelf, and commended Chriſt to thy heart above all things, and made thee reſolve on his ſtrength to wage War with every known tranſgreſſion, and thou art, in ſome meaſure, as a weaned Child, acquieſcing in what he doth unto thee, *deſiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully*; Then thy convictions of ſin and miſery, and whatſoever thou doſt plead as a preparatory work, is ſufficient, and thou art to debate no more about it; only be adviſed to ſtudy new diſcoveries of the ſenſe of thy loſt condition every day, becauſe of thy old and new ſins, and alſo to ſee freſh help in Chriſt, who is a Prieſt for ever to make interceſſion, and to have the work of Sanctification and patience with thankfulneſs renewed and quickened often: for ſomewhat of that work, which

which abaſeth thee, exalteth Chriſt, and conformeth to his will, muſt convey thee throughout all thy life-time in this World.

We come now to ſpeak of ſome more clear and ſure marks, by which men may take up their gracious ſtate and intereſt in Chriſt. The firſt thing whereby men may know it, is, their cloſing with Chriſt in the Goſpel, wherein he is held forth. This is beleiving, or faith, which in the condition of the Covenant, *Rom.* 4. 16. It is faith, &c. *Act.* 16. 31. *Believe---and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Now, although in propriety of ſpeech, it is hard to prove an intereſt by faith, it being our very intereſt in him; yet the hearts cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, is ſo diſcernable in it ſelf, that it may well be placed amongſt the marks of a gracious ſtate: And if a man can make out this, that he beleiveth on, and in Chriſt Jeſus, he thereby doth prove a very true intereſt in him. Many do ſcare at this as a mark, upon one of theſe three grounds ordinarily. (1.) Some conceive faith to be a difficult myſterious thing, hardly attainable. To theſe I ſay, do not miſtake; Faith is not ſo difficult as many do apprehend it to be. I grant true faith in the meaneſt degree, is the gift of God, and above the power of fleſh and blood: for God muſt draw men to Chriſt, *Phil.* 1. 29. *John* 6. 44. Yet, it were a reflection upon Chriſt, and all he hath done, to ſay it were a matter of inſuperable difficulty, as is clear, *Rom.* 10. 6, --11. it were according

cording to that Scripture, as much upon the matter, as to ſay, Chriſt came not from Heaven, is not riſen from the dead, or aſcended victorious to Heaven. I ſay, he hath made the way to heaven moſt eaſie; and faith, which is the condition required on our part, more eaſie than men do imagine. For the better underſtanding of this, conſider, that juſtifying faith, is not to believe that I am elected, or, to believe that God loveth me, or that Chriſt died for me, or the like. Theſe things are indeed very difficult and almoſt impoſſible at the firſt hand to be won at by thoſe who are ſerious, whileſt natural Atheiſts, and deluded Hypocrites find no difficulty in aſſerting all thoſe things. I ſay, true juſtifying faith is not any of the foreſaid things; neither is it ſimply the beleiving of any ſentence that is written or that can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Chriſt Jeſus, believeth what God hath ſaid about mans ſinful miſerable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, that there is life in the Son, who was ſlain, *and is riſen again from the dead*, &c. But none of theſe, nor the believing of many ſuch truths, do ſpeak out juſtifying faith, or that beleiving on the Son of God ſpoken of in Scripture: For, then it were ſimply an act of the underſtanding. But true juſtifying faith, which we now ſeek after, as a good mark of intereſt in Chriſt, is cheifly and principally an act or work of the heart and will, having

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preſuppoſed ſundry things about truth in the underſtanding, with the heart it is believed unto Salvation, *Rom.* 10. 10. and although it ſeem (verſ. 9. of that Chapter) that a man is ſaved upon condition that he believe this truth, *God raiſed Chriſt from the dead*; yet we muſt underſtand another thing there, and *verſ.* 10. then the believing the truth of that propoſition: For, beſide that all Devils have that Faith whereby they believe that God *raiſed Chriſt from the dead*: So the Scripture hath clearly reſolved juſtifying Faith into a receiving of Chriſt, *Joh.* 1. 12. The receiving of Chriſt is there explained to be the believing on his Name. It is ſtill called a ſtaying on the Lord, *Iſa.* 26. 3. a truſting in God, often mentioned in the *Pſalms*, and the word is a leaning on him, it is a believing on Chriſt, *John* 6. 29. and often ſo expreſt in the New-Teſtament. When God maketh men believe ſavingly, *He is ſaid to draw them unto Chriſt; and when the Lord inviteth them to believe, he calleth them to come to him*, Joh. 6. 37, 44. *The Kingdome of heaven is like a man finding a Jewel, wherewith he falleth in love*, Mat. 13. 44, to 46. Now, I ſay, this action of the heart on Chriſt Jeſus, is not ſo difficult a thing as is conceived. Shall that be judged a myſterious difficult thing, which doth conſiſt much in deſire? if men have but an appetite, they have it; for, they are bleſſed that hunger after righteouſneſſe, *Mat.* 5. 6. *If you will, you are wel-*

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come, Rev. 22. 17. Is it a matter of ſuch intricacy, and inſuperable difficulty, greedily to look to that exalted Saviour, *Iſa.* 45. 22. and to receive a thing that is offered, held forth, and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it: and in a manner open my mouth and give way to it? Such a thing is faith, *Pſal.* 81. 10. if not leſs. Oh if I could perſwade people what is juſtifying Faith which impropriateth Chriſt to me! We often ſcare people from their juſt reſt and quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be ſome deep myſterious thing, and by moving unneceſſary doubts about it, whereby it is needleſly darkened. (2.) Some make no uſe of this mark, as judging it a high preſumptuous crime to pretend to ſo excellent a thing as is the very condition of the New-Covenant. To theſe I ſay, you need not ſtartle ſo much at it, as if it were high pride to pretend to it: for whatſoever true Faith be, men muſt reſolve to have it, or nothing at all; all other marks are in vain without it; a thouſand things beſides will not do the buſineſſe: Unleſs a man believe, he abideth in the ſtate of condemnation, *Joh.* 3. 18, 36. (3) Others do not meddle with this noble mark of faith, becauſe they judge it a work of greateſt difficulty to find out Faith where it is. To theſe I ſay, It is not ſo difficult to find it out, ſince he that believeth, hath the witneſſe in himſelf, 1 *John* 5. 10. It is a thing which by ſome ſerious ſearch may be known. Not only

onely may we do much to find it out by the preparatory work going before it in many, as the apprehending and believing of a mans loſt eſtate, and that he cannot do his own buſineſſe, and that there is ſatisfying fulneſs in Chriſt, very deſireable, if he could overtake it. A ſerious minding of this, with a heart laid open for relief; as alſo, by the ordinary companions and concomitants of it, *viz.* the liking of Chriſts dominion, his Kingly and Prophetical Office, a deſire to reſign my ſelf wholly up to him to be at his diſpoſing: As alſo by the native conſequences of it, *viz.* the aſſoyling of the World, the aſſoiling of my own conſcience according to the word, a heart purfying work, a working love, &c. I ſay, not onely may we know faith by theſe things, but it is diſcernable by it ſelf and of its own nature: although I deny not but there muſt be ſome help of Gods Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. As alſo that God hath allowed many evidences and marks, as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themſelves, 1 *John* 5. 13. Yet I ſtill ſay, that faith, or beleiving, which is ſome acting of the heart upon Chriſt in the Goſpel, and the tranſacting with him there, is diſcernable of it ſelf, and by it ſelf, to a judicious underſtanding perſon, with an ordinary influence of the ſpirit; unleſs the Lord, for reaſons known to himſelf, do overcloud a mans reflex light, by which he ſhould take

take up and perceive what is in him.

This juſtifying faith which we aſſert to be ſo diſcernable, is, in the Lords deep wiſdom and gracious condeſcendency, variouſly expreſt in Scripture, according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after him, ſo as every one, who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould. It ſometimes acteth by a deſire of union with him in Chriſt. This is that looking to him, *Iſa.* 45. 22. This ſeems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times, perhaps in that ſame perſon. Men will look to what they dare not approach (to their apprehenſion) which they dare not touch or embrace. They may look to one, to whom they dare not ſpeak. Yet God hath made the promiſe to faith in that acting, as the forecited Scripture doth ſhew; and this he hath done mercifully and wiſely; for this is the onely diſcernable way of the acting of faith of ſome perſons ſomtimes: ſuch are the actings or outgoings of faith expreſt in Scripture by *hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs*, Mat. 5. 6. and that expreſt by *willing*, Rev. 22. 17. Again, this faith goeth out ſometimes in the act of recumbency, or leaning on the Lord, the ſoul taking up Chriſt then as a reſting ſtone; and God hath ſo held him out, although he be a ſtumbling ſtone to others, *Rom.* 9. 33. This acting of it, is hinted in the expreſſions of *truſting and ſtaying on God*, ſo often mentioned in Scripture; and

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precious promiſes are made to this acting of faith; *Iſa.* 26. 3, 4. *God will keep them in perfect peace whoſe minds are ſtaid on him*, becauſe ſuch do truſt in him. *Truſt in the Lord, for with him is everlaſting ſtrength.* So *Pſ.* 125. 1. *They that truſt in the Lord ſhall be as Mount Zion which abideth for ever.* I ſay the Lord hath made promiſes to this way of Faiths acting, as knowing it will go often out after him in this way with many perſons, & this way of its acting will be moſt diſcernable to them. It goeth out after God ſomtimes by an act of waiting, when the Soul hath ſomwhat depending before God, and hath not got out his mind ſatisfyingly about that thing; then Faith doth wait, and ſo it hath the Promiſe, *Iſa.* 49. 23. Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the Soul apprehendeth God thruſting it a way, and threatning its ruine; So *Job* 13. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* The faith of that poor woman, *Mat.* 15. 22. 28. ſo highly commended by Chriſt, did go out in this way of willful acting over difficulties; and the Lord ſpeaketh much good of it, and to it, becauſe ſome will be put to it, to exerciſe faith that way ſometimes, and ſo they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to inſtance all the ſeveral wayes of the acting of faith upon, and its exerciſe about, and outgoing after Chriſt. I may ſay, according to the various conditions and preſſures of the ſoul of man, the Lord hath variouſly held out himſelf and his fulneſs in Chriſt under

der divers notions, as might most fitly meet the distresse or condition of man; and accordingly, Faith, which God hath appointed to traffick and travel between Christ and Man, as the instrument of conveyance of his fullnesse unto man, and of maintaining union and communion with him, acteth variously and differently upon God in Christ; for, Faith is the very shaping out of a mans heart, according to Gods device of Salvation by Christ Jesus, in whom *it pleased the Father that fulnesse should dwell*; So that let Christ turne what way he will, Faith turneth and poineth that way. Now, he turneth all ways, in which he can be useful to poor man, and therefore faith acteth accordingly on him, for drawing out of that fulnes, according to a mans case and condition. As for example, The soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storms of Gods wrath; Christ is fine raiment, *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. Then accordingly Faiths work here is to put on the Lord Jesus, *Gal.* 3. 27. The Soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfie: Christ Jesus is Milk, Wine, Water, the Bread of Life, and the true Manna, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. *Joh.* 6. 48. 51. He is the feast of Fat things, and of Wine refined, *Isa.* 25. 6. Then the work and exercise of faith, is, to go buy, eat and drink abundantly, *Isa.* 55. 1. *Joh.* 6. 53-57. The soul is pursued for guilt more or lesse, and is not Law-biding: Christ Jesus is the City of refuge, and the High-Priest there, during whose

life-time (that is for ever) the poor man who wins thither is ſafe. Then the work and exerciſe of faith is to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us, *Heb.* 6. 18. In a word, whatſoever way he may benefit poor man, ſo he ſpeaketh of himſelf; and as he holdeth out himſelf in the Scripture, ſo faith doth point toward him. If he be a Bridegroom, faith will go out in a marriage relation; If he be a Father, faith pleads the man to be a child; If he be a ſhepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of his ſheep; If he be a Lord, faith calls him ſo, which none can do but by the Spirit of Jeſus; If he be dead and riſen again for our Juſtification, faith beleiveth God hath raiſed him on that account, *Rom.* 10. 9. whereſoever he be, there would faith be; and whatſoever he is, faith would be ſomewhat proportionally. For, by faith the heart is ſhapen out in breadth and length for him: yea, when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in his truth, although faith ſee not much, yet it beleiveth on his Name, upon the very fame he hath ſent abroad of himſelf, *Joh.* 1. 12.

But here for avoiding of miſtakes, conſider, 1. That although juſtifying Faith acteth ſo variouſly; yet every Beleiver, who hath a good title to Chriſt Jeſus, hath not all theſe various actings and exerciſes of Faith; for his condition craveth them not: and alſo the Maſter is pleaſed not to lead out the faith of ſome perſons at ſome times

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in some of these ways (for reasons known to himself) even when their necessity (to their apprehension) calleth for such acting of faith. Surely every one dare not say, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.* Many would not have gon up with that woman I spake of, *Mat.* 15. but would have been discouraged and quit the pursuit. It is on this account that Christ doth highly commend the faith of some, beyond the faith of others, *Mat.* 8. 10. *and* 15. 28. Many good people are much disquieted about their faith, because it goeth not out in all those wayes we find recorded in Scripture: But there is hardly any man will be found, whose faith hath acted all these ways. 2. Many of these actings of faith are much intended and remitted. They are sometimes strong and vigorous, and discernable; and sometimes they fail, and misbeleif doth prevail, so as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a mans estate by these. We find the Saints very different from themselves in regard of the actings of faith sometimes, as we shewen before. 3. Each one of these actings of faith, speaketh good to the person in whom it is, and hath promises annexed unto it, as we have said. Yet 4. Although these actings of faith have promises annexed unto them, they are not, for that, the condition of the New Covenant; for then every one behoved to have each one of them, which is not true, as we have said before. A promise is made to him who overcometh, but per-

ſeverance is not the condition of the New Covenant, but doth ſuppoſe it. There are promiſes made to the exerciſe of all Graces in Scripture; but onely faith is the condition of the Covenant. I ſay then, theſe promiſes are made to theſe actings of Faith, not as ſuch, but as they do ſuppoſe Juſtifying faith, which is the condition of the Covenant: All theſe are actings of faith, but not as it is juſtifying. Therefore 5. There is ſomewhat common to all gracious perſons, which may be ſuppoſed by all the foreſaid actings of faith, wherein the nature and eſſence of juſtifying faith ſtandeth; and this is the hearts ſatisfaction about Gods device of Salvation by Chriſt; when man pleadeth Gods invention of ſatisfaction to juſtice through Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all fulneſſe doth dwell now by the Fathers pleaſure; when the ſoul and heart of man acquieſceth in that, then it believeth unto Salvation. As at firſt, the Lord made man ſuitable to the Covenant of Works, by creating him perfect, and ſo putting him in a capacity to perform his Will in that Covenant: So under the New Covenant, when God giveth the new heart to man, he ſets the *Idea* and ſtamp of all his device in the New Covenant upon the man, ſo as there is a conſonancy to Gods will there: Thus he beareth the image of the ſecond *Adam*, Chriſt Jeſus, on him. This is a great part of the new heart, and is moſt oppoſed to works; ſince now the man abſolutely falleth off from works, becoming

coming dead to the Law (as to the point of justification) by the body of Christ, *Rom.* 7. 4. Man perceiving, that God hath devised a way of satisfying Divine Justice, and recovering lost man by the incarnation of Christ, he thinks this so good and sure a way, that he absolutely giveth up with the Law, as I said before, and closeth with this device; and this is believing or faith, very opposite to works, and all resting thereupon; this cannot fail to be in all gracious persons, in whom many of the actings of faith are not to be found. This doth clearly suppose known distresse in a man, without all relief in himself; this supposeth known fulness in Christ as the alone sufficient relief; this imports a sort of impropriation: for the heart pleading that device, it so far swayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly supposed in all the actings of faith, spoken of before. He that greedily hungereth, hath this; and he that leaneth hath this, and he that putteth on Christ, hath this, &c. This is to esteem Christ the *wisdom and power of God to Salvation*; So is he said to be to all that believe, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. They esteem that device wise and sure, beseeming God, and that is to believe. On this account Christ, who is the rejected stone to many, *is precious to them who believe*; a fit stone to recover, for life, and beautifie the *tottering building and fabrick of lost man*, 1 *Pet.* 1. *The Kingdom of God is like a man finding a treasure, for which with joy he selleth all*, Mat.

13. 44. These words hold out the very way of beleiving, *viz.* Salvation is discovered in the Gospel to be by Christ; the heart valueth that invention as satisfying. This is to beleive on the Son of God *lifted up*, which is compared to the *looking up to the brazen Serpent*, *Joh.* 3. 14. It was mans *approbation* of that *device*, which made it effectual for his *healing*. So is it here, *He that believeth, setteth to his seal that God is true.* True? wherein? In that record he hath born, *That God hath provided life for men; and placed it all in Christ.* 1 Joh. 5. 10. 11. *He that believeth not, maketh God a lyar.* Where? In his saying that Christ is a safe and sure way to Heaven. This is the pleading and acquiescing in that device, and it is consonant to all, I know, spoken of *Justifying Faith in Scripture.* This is the beleiving on Christ and on his Name, the receiving of him, and resting on him for *Salvation* in our *Catechisms.* The *believing that Jesus is the Christ*, that is, *the Anointed One* whom the father hath sealed, and set apart and qualifyed for the work of reconciling man unto God; and *he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 1. This is to believe *with the heart that God hath raised Christ from the dead.* The man believeth Christ died, and is raised on the account of *satisfaction* for mans *transgression*: Devils may believe that. Nay, but the man I speak of, *believeth it with his heart*, (which no natural man doth,) until anew heart be given

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unto him) that is, he cordially pleadeth, is satisfied with, and acquiesceth in this noble invention. And thus faith layeth out it self now and then in its actings, out-goings, and exercise, according to all the Covenant-relations, under which Christ is held forth in the Scripture.

Now, I say, This faith is discernable, not only in these actings many times; a man may know if his heart doth hunger after Christ and flee for refuge to him, when pursued, and if he doth commit himself unto God, *&c.* but also in its very nature, as it is justifying, it is discernable, and may be known. A man may clearly know, if from known distress in himself upon the report and fame of Christs fulness, his heart doth plead Gods device in the new Covenant, if it goeth out after Christ in that invention and pleadeth him a Lord of the life of men, terminating and resting there, and nowhere else, acquiescing in that contrivement with desire and complacency. This is a discernable thing. Therefore I obtest men impartially to examine themselves; and if they find that their heart is closed so with that device of salvation, and is gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they conclude a sure and true interest in Christ Jesus, and a good claim and title to the crown, since *he that believeth shall never perish, but have everlasting life*, Joh. 3. 16, 36.

Object. *Hypocrites and Reprobates have a sort of faith, and are said to believe*, Joh. 2. 23. Act. 8. 13.

and cannot choose but go out after Christ, and that device of Salvation, when they hear of it; and they professe they do so, yet are deluded, and so may I be.

Answ. To say nothing of that thought of your heart, [whereby you wonder that any man should not plead the device of Salvation by Christ, and lead out towards him] as a very promising thing, and speaking out justifying faith to be in your bosome; and to say nothing in contradiction to that which you think, That a natural man, whilst such, and before he get a new heart, can plead that device, and believe with his heart and affectionately, that which perfectly overthroweth the Covenant of works, and abaseth man in the point of self-righteousnes already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconsistent with many Scriptural truths: I offer these differences between the faith of all Hypocrites or reprobates, and that true saving justifying faith, whereof we have spoken. 1. They never close with Jesus Christ (in that device) and him alone as a sufficient covering of the eyes, as is said of *Abraham* to *Sarah*, *Gen.* 20. 16. They still hold fast somewhat of their own, at least to help to procure Gods favour and salvation: Their heart doth still speak, as that young mans speech, *Luke* 18. 18, 21. doth insinuate, What want I that I may inherit life? Beside that, they do still retain their former lovers, and will not break their Covenants with

with Hell and Death, imagining they may have Chriſt with theſe things equally ſharing in their heart, contrary to that, *A man cannot ſerve two Maſters, Mat.* 6. 24. Either Chriſt muſt be judged abſolute Lord, and worthy to be ſo, or nothing at all. And ſo it is clear, their heart is not ſhapen out for that device of ſalvation by Chriſt, whom God hath alone made Lord here, in whom all fulneſs ſhall dwell. But where juſtifying faith is, the ſoul of a man and his heart doth cloſe with Chriſt, and him alone, having no confidence in the fleſh, *Phil.* 3. 3. *Pſal.* 62. 5. he truſteth only in God. As alſo the man here giveth up with other lovers, are they compleat with Chriſt; They reſolve not to be for another, *Hoſ.* 3. 3. They call him *Lord*, which a man can onely do by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 12. 3. 2. As Hypocrites and Reprobates do never cloſe with Chriſt alone; ſo they do never cloſe with full Chriſt, as he is anointed to be a King to rule over a man in all things; a Prieſt, to procure pardon, and to make peace for man upon all occaſions; a Prophet, to be wiſdom, and a Teacher and Counſellour in all caſes to man. So they do not receive Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt and third offices. But where true juſtifying faith is, a man cloſeth with whole Chriſt in all his offices, judging all his will good, holy, juſt and ſpiritual, *Rom.* 7. 12. and right concerning all things, *Pſalm* 119. 128. making mention of his righteouſneſs onely, *Pſal.* 71. 16.

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The man also giveth up himself to be taught of him, *Mat.* 11. 29. So that Christ is made to the true believer with his own consent, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and compleat redemption, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. And although he hath not all these things formally in exercise when his heart goeth out after Christ; yet, upon search and tryal, it will be found with him as I have said. 3. Hypocrites and Reprobates do never close with Christ, and all the inconveniences may follow him; they stick at that, with that man, *Mat.* 8. 19. 20. But where true justifying faith is, a man doth close with him on all hazzards; he resolveth to forgo all, rather then to forgo Christ, *Mark* 10. 28. he reckoneth all to be losse and dung for the excellency of Christ Jesus, as his Lord, and to be found in him. *Phil.* 3. 8. We might give other differences also, As that true faith is operative, purifying the heart, *Act.* 15. 9. working by love, *Gal.* 5. 6. Whilst Hypocrites do onely cleanse the outside of the platter, *Mat.* 23. 25. *and do all to be seen of men*, Mat. 6. 5. not seeking the honour that is of God onely, and so cannot believe, *Joh.* 5. 44. We might also shew that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with other saving graces: But because these things will co-incide with what followeth, and here we are shewing that a man may take up his gracious state by his faith, and the acting thereof on Christ, we pass these things.

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The second great mark of a gracious state and true saving interest in Jesus Christ, is, the new creature, *2 Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* This new creation or renovation of that man, is a very sensible change, although not in those who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; because those have had this new creature from that time in them, so as this change in after period of time, is not discernable; yet in those who have been regenerated and brought into Christ, after they were come to greater age, and to have been more palpably under the power of darkness, before they were translated into the Kingdom of Christ, *Col.* 1. 13. But in all who do warrantably pretend to Christ, this new creature must be, although some do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, so as others do, because they have not been equally, in regard of practice, under the power of darkness. This new creature is called the new man, *Gal.* 3. 10. which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or a new hand, but *a new man.* There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is, the new heart: which new principle of life sendeth forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of him who created in, *Col.* 3. 10. So as the party is renewed in some measure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Christ, may be reduced to these two great heads.

First,

First, there is a renovation of the mans person, soul and body, in some measure. 1. His understanding is renewed, so as he judgeth Christ Preached in the Gospel, to be the wisdome and power of God, a wise, strong device beseeming God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23, 24. He knoweth the things of God really and solidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies, but all to be yea and amen, solid, certain, substantial things, having a desirable accomplishment in Christ, and resolving much in him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. 2 *Cor.* 1. 18. Natural men, educated under Gospel ordinances, although they have some notional knowledge of God, Christ, Promises, the motions of the holy Spirit, &c. so as they may Confer, Preach, and dispute of these things; yet they look on them as common received Maximes of Christianity, from which to recede were a singularity and disgrace; but not as real, solid, substantial truths, so as to adventure their Souls and Everlasting being on them. The understanding is renewed also to take up somewhat of God in the creatures, as bearing sparks of his glorious attributes, *Psal.* 10. 1. They see the Heavens declaring his Glory and Power, and somewhat of God in providence and dispensations that fall out: *His wonderous works declare that his Name is near*, *Psal.* 75. 1. The understanding also taketh up the conditions and cases of the soul otherwise then it was wont to do; As we find the Saints usually speaking in Scripture,

O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, &c. Psal. 16. 2. *My Soul said, thy face will I seek*; Psal. 26. 8. *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul?* Psal. 42. 5. Psal. 43. 5. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul,* Ps. 116. 7. 2. The heart and affections are renewed. The heart is made a new heart, a heart of flesh, capable of impressions, having a copy of his law stamped on it, and fear of God put into it, whereby the mans duty becometh in a manner native and kindly to the man, *Jer.* 32. 39, 40. *Ezek.* 36. 26. It was before a heart of stone, void of the fear of God. The affections are renewed now. The love is renewed in some good measure: it goeth out after God; *I will love thee Lord,* Psal. 18. 1. after his Law, *O how I love thy Law!* Psal. 119. 97. after those who have Gods Image in them, *John* 13. 35. 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. This love to Gods people is upon a pure account, as they are the Children of God, and do keep his Statutes, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. It is with a pure heart, *Psal.* 119. 63. and therefore it goeth towards all such whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be such, *Psal.* 119. 63. *I am a Companion to all them, &c.* In all cases and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautifie or commend but the Image of God. And this love is so fervent many times, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. that it putteth it self out in all relations, so as a man seeketh a Godly Wife, a Godly Master, a Godly Servant, a Godly Counsellor, if he have to choose upon, *Psal.* 101. 6. and it is not quenched

ed by many waters, *Cant.* 8. 7. many *imperfection* and *infirmities*, *difference in opinion*, *wrongs received* will not altogether quench love. Alſo it is communicative of good according to its meaſure, and as the caſe of the poor godly requireth, *Pſal.* 16. 2. 1 *Joh.* 3. 17, 18, 19. The mans hatred is alſo renewed, and is now bent *againſt ſin*, *Pſal.* 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts*: againſt Gods enemies, as ſuch, *Pſal.* 139. 21, 22. *Do not I hate them that hate thee? &c.* The *joy* or *delight* is renewed, for it runneth towards God, *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven? &c.* towards *his Law* and *Will*, *Pſal.* 1. 2. *His delight is in the Law of the Lord.* And towards the *Godly* and *their fellowſhip*, *Pſal.* 16. 3. ---*In whom is all my delight.* The ſorrow is turned againſt ſin which hath wronged Chriſt, *Zech.* 12. 10. *Looking on him whom they have pierced, they mourn*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. The ſorrow is godly there, and againſt what incroacheth upon Gods honour; they are ſorrowful for the ——— aſſemblies, and the reproach of that is their burden, *Zeph.* 3. 18. There is ſome renovation in all the affections, as in every other part of the ſoul pointing now towards God. 3. The *very outward members of the man are renewed*, as the Scriptures ſpeaks, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, &c. ſo that thoſe members, which once were improved *as weapons of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin*, are now improved *as weapons of righteouſneſs unto holineſs*, *Rom.* 6. 19.

Secondly,

Secondly, *A man who is in Chriſt, is renewed in ſome meaſure in all his ways. Behold all things are new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. The man becomes new, 1. *in the way of his intereſt*. He was upon any good before, though but apparent, and at beſt but external, *Pſal.* 4. 6. But now his intereſt and buſineſs is, how to be found in Chriſt in that day, *Phil.* 3. 9. or, how to be forth-coming to him, and *walk before him in the land of the living*, *Pſal.* 56. 13. which he would chuſe among all the *mercies that fill this earth*, *Pſal.* 119. 64. The intereſt of Chriſt alſo becometh the mans intereſt, as appeareth in the ſong of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 2. And in the ſong of *Mary*, *Luke* 1. It is ſtrange to ſee people newly converted, and having reached out the beginnings of knowledge, concern and intereſt themſelves in the publick matters of Chriſts kingdome, ſo deſirous to have him riding proſperouſly, and ſubduing the people under him. 2. The man that *is in Chriſt, is renewed in the way of his worſhip*. He was wont to ſerve God in the *oldneſs of the letter*, for the faſhion, anſwering the letter of the command in the outſide of duty, which one in whom the *Old man* hath *abſolute dominion* can do: But now he *worſhippeth God in the newneſs of the Spirit*, *Rom.* 7. 6. In a new way, wherein he is helped by the *Spirit of God*, *Rom.* 8. 26. beyond the reach of fleſh and blood. He loveth now the *true and living God*, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. *in Spirit and in truth*, *Joh.* 4. 24. having ſpiritual apprehenſions of God,

and

and engaged in his very ſoul in that work, doing and ſaying truly, and not feignedly, when he worſhippeth, ſtill deſiring to approach unto him as a *living God*, who heareth and ſeeth him, and can accept his ſervice, *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2. I grant, he fails of this many times; yet I may ſay, ſuch worſhip he intendeth, and ſometimes overtaketh, and doth not much reckon worſhip, which is not ſo performed unto God; and the *iniquity of his holy things*, is not the leaſt part of his burthen and exerciſe: Such a worſhip, natural men are ſtrangers unto, whilſt they babble out their vain-glorious boaſtings, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. to an unknown God, *Acts* 17. 23. 3. The *man that is in Chriſt, is renewed in the way of his outward calling & imployment in the world*; he now reſolveth to be about it, becauſe God hath commanded ſo, *Rom.* 12. 11. and to eye God in it, as his laſt end, *doing it to his glory*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. and ſtudieth to keep ſome intercourſe with God *in the exerciſe of his outward employments*, as *Jacob* doth in his latter Will, *Gen.* 49. 18. and *Nehemiah* did, *Nehem.* 2. 4. ſo as the man reſolveth to walk with God, and ſet him always before him, *Pſal.* 16. 8. wherein I deny not he falleth often. 4. He *becometh new in the way of his relations*; he becometh a more dutifull Husband, Father, Brother, Maſter, Servant, Neighbor, *&c. herein doth he exerciſe himſelf to keep a conſcience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God*, *Acts* 24. 16. 1 *Cor.* 9. 22. *becoming all things*

things to all men. 5. He *becometh new in the way of his lawfull liberties*, he ſtudieth to make uſe of meat, drink, ſleep, recreations, apparel, with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawful thing, 1 *Cor.* 6.12, 13. nor to give offence to others in the uſe of theſe things, *Rom.*14.20, 21. & 15.2. nor *uſing liberty as an occaſion to the fleſh*, *Gal.* 5. 13. Yea, he laboureth to uſe all theſe things as a ſtranger on earth, *ſo as his moderation may appear*, *Phil.* 4. 5. And ſome way he doth eye God, as the laſt end in theſe things, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *doing all to the glory of God* : So as we may ſay of that man, *old things are much paſt away, all things are in ſome meaſure become new*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. He that is ſo a new creature, is undoubtedly in Chriſt.

This renovation of a man in all manner of converſation, and this being under law to God in all things, *is that holineſſe without which no one ſhall ſee God*, *Heb.* 12. 14. Men may fancy things to themſelves, but unleſſe they ſtudy to approve themſelves unto God in all well-pleaſing, and reach ſome inward teſtimony of ſincerity that way, they ſhall not aſſure their hearts before him. The teſtimony of mens conſcience is their rejoycing, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *By this we know that we know him*, *if we keep his Commandments*, 1 *John* 2. 3. 1 *John* 3. 20, 21. No confidence if the heart condemn. This is the New Creature, having a *principle of new ſpiritual life* infuſed

by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new, and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have said, so as he is pointed towards the whole Law, both the commands which forbids sin; so he resolveth to set against secret sins, not to lay a stumbling block before the blind, *Lev.*19.14. little sins, which are judged so by many, the least things of the Law, *Matth.* 5.19. *spiritual sins*, filthiness of the *spirit*, 2 *Cor.*7.1. sins of omission as well as of commission, since men are to be judged by these, *Mat.*2542,43,44. yea, sins that are wind'd in into his natural humor and constitution, and so are as a right eye or hand to him, *Matth.* 5.29. This new principal of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the man set against every known sin, so far as not to allow peaceable abode to any known darkness, 2 *Cor.* 6.14. As also he is pointed towards those commands which relate to duty, and the quickening of grace in man. It maketh a man respect all known commands, *Psal.* 110.6. *to live godly, righteously, and soberly, Tit.*2.12. yea, and to study aright and sincere, way and manner of doing things, resolving not to give over this study of conformity to Gods Will whilst he lives on earth, but still to *bend forward towards the prize of the high calling of God, Phil.* 3.13.14. This is true holiness, very becoming all those who pretend to be heirs of that holy habitations, in the immediate company and fellowship of a holy God, 1 *Joh.* 3.3.

Some

Some may think theſe things high attainments, and very hard to be atained to. I grant it is ture. But firſt, Remember, that there is a very large allowance in the Covenant promiſed to his people, which maketh things more eaſie. The Lord hath engaged *to take away the ſtony heart, to give a heart of fleſh*, a new heart, a heart to fear him for ever; he hath engaged to *put his law in mens hearts, to put his fear in their heart, to make them keep that Law; to put his Spirit within them to cauſe them to keep it*: he hath promiſed to *ſatisfie the Prieſts with fatneſs, that the ſouls of the people may be ſatiated with goodneſs*, and to *keep, and water them continually every moment*, *Ezek.* 26. 29. *Jer.* 32. 39, 40. and 31. 33. *Ezek.* 36. 27. *Jer.* 31. 14. and 31. 12. *Iſa.* 27. 3. and if he muſt be enquired to do all theſe things unto men, he engageth to *powr out the Spirit of grace and ſupplycation on them*, and ſo to learn them how to ſeek theſe things, and how to put him to it, to do all for them, *Zech.* 12. 10. Secondly, for the ſatisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumſcribed and inlarged it, will not be found, in all the degrees of it, in every gracious perſon. But it is well, if 1. There be a new man, we cannot grant leſs; *If any man be in Chriſt, there muſt be a new creature*; and that is the new man. *Epheſ.* 4. 21, 22, 23, 24. which all muſt put on who are ſavingly taught of Chriſt. There muſt be ſome renewing after the image of God in a mans ſoul and body;

There must be somewhat of every part of the man pointing towards God: although I grant every one cannot instruct this to others, neither discern it in himself, because many know not the distinct parts of the soul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of soul and body. Yet it will be found there is some such thing in them, yea, they have a witness of it within them, if you make the thing plain and clear to them what it is. 2. There must be such a respect unto Gods known Commands, that a man doth not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him; for *what concord is between light and darknesse? 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16. Psal. 119. 6.* and *66. 18. he must not regard iniquity.* I grant men may be ignorant of many commands, and many sins, and may imagine in some cases, that some sins are not hatefull unto God. But supposing that they are instructed in these things, there can be no agreement between righteousnes and unrighteousnes. 3. Men must point towards all the Law of God, in their honest resolutions; for this is nothing else, then to give up the heart unto God, to put his Law in it without exception, which is a part of the Covenant we are to make with God, *Heb. 8. 10.* I grant many know not how to point towards Gods Law in all their ways; but if it be made manifest unto them, how that should be done, they will point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their resolutions in their practice; yet when they have

have failed, they can ſay, They did reſolve otherwayes, and will yet honeſtly, and without guile reſolve to do otherways, and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their reſolution, when the Lord diſcovereth it to them, which he will in due time. 4. When we are to judge of our ſtate by the new creature, we muſt do it at a new convenient time, when we are in good caſe, at leaſt, not when we are in worſt caſe; for the fleſh and ſpirit do Luſt and Fight againſt other, *Gal.* 5. 17. and ſometimes the one, and ſometimes the other doth prevail. Now, I ſay, we muſt chuſe a convenient time, when the ſpiritual part is not by ſome tentation worſted and over-powred by the fleſh; for in that caſe the new creature is recoyled back in its ſtreams, and much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in ſome ſmall things not eaſily diſcernable, whereby it maketh oppoſition to the fleſh, according to the foreſaid Scripture; for, now it is the time of winter in the ſoul, and we may not expect fruit, yea, not leaves, as in ſome other ſeaſon; only here, leſt prophane Atheiſts ſhould make advantage of this, we will ſay, *That the Spirit doth often prevail over the fleſh in a godly man, and the ſcope, aim, tenour and main drift of his way is in the Law of the Lord*, that is his walk, *Pſal.* 119. 1. whereas the path-way, and ordinary courſe of the wicked is ſin, as is often hinted in the book of the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*. And if it happen that a godly man be over-maſtered by any tranſgreſſion,

ordinarily it is his ſad exerciſe; and we ſuppoſe he keeps it ſtill in dependency before God, to have it rectified, as *David* ſpeaketh, *Pſal.* 56. 13. *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?*

Object. *Athiſts and Hypocrites may have great changes and renovation wrought upon them, and in them, and I fear mine be ſuch.*

Anſw. I grant that athieſts and hypocrites have many things in them which do look like the new creature. Firſt, in regard of the parts of the man. They may (1.) come to much knowledge, as *Hebr.* 6. 4. They are enlightned, (2.) There may be a reel amongſt their affections, as they receive the word with joy, *Mat.* 13. 20. (3.) They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man, both about freedom from ſin, and engagement to poſitive duty, as that Phariſee did, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. Yea, (4.) in regard of their practical underſtanding, they may judge ſome things of God to be excellent. The people ſaid that never man ſpake as Chriſt, *Joh* 7. 46. Secondly, Hypocrites, may have a great deal of profeſſion. 1 They may talk of the Law and Goſpel, and Covenant, as the wicked do, *Pſal.* 50. 16. 2. They may confeſs ſin openly to their own ſhame, as King *Saul* did, 1 *Sam*, 26. 21. 3. They may humble themſelves in ſackcloth with *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* 21. 27. 4. They may enquire buſily after duty, and come chearfully to receive it, *Iſa.* 58, 2. 5. They may

may joyn with Gods interest in a hard and difficult time, as *Demas*, and other hypocrites in the book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, who afterwards fell off. 6. They may give much of their goods to God and the Saints, as *Acts* 5.1, 2. if not all their goods, 1 *Cor.* 13.3. Yea, 7. It is not impossible for some such, being straitly engaged in their credit, to give their bodies to be burnt, as in the fore-cited place. Thirdly, Hypocrites may advance far in the common and ordinary steps of a Christian work, such as the Elect have, when God leads them captive. As, 1. they may be under great convictions of sin, as *Judas* was, *Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5. So was King *Saul* often. 2. They may tremble at the word of God, and be under much terrour, as *Felix* was, *Acts* 24. 25. They may rejoyce in receiveing of the Truth, as *Mat.* 13. 20. 4. They may be in some peace and quiet in expectation of salvation by Christ, as the fooliſh virgins were, *Matt.* 24. 5. All this may be backed and followed with some good measure of reformation. The unclean spirit may go out of them, *Mat* 22. 43. *Luke* 18. 11. 12. 6. This work may seem to be confirmed by some special experiences and tastings of the good word of God *Hebr.* 6. 4. Fourthly, Hypocrites may have some things very like the saving graces of the Spirit, As, (1.) They may have a sort of faith with *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 13. (2.) A sort of repentance, and walk mournfully, *Mal.* 3. 14.

3. A great fear of God, such as *Balaam*, who for a house ful of *gold* would not go with the messengers of *Balak*, without leave asked of God, and given. *Num.*22.18. 4. They have a sort of hope, *Job* 13. 13. 5. They have some *love*: So had *Herod* to *John*, *Mar.*6.26. I need not to insist; it is out of all question they have counterfeits of all saving graces. 5. They have somewhat like the special communications of God, and the witnessing of his Spirit, as somewhat like the Powers of the World to come powerfully on them, with some flashes of joy arising thence, as *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. Notwithstanding all which they are but almost perswaded with *Agrippa* to be Christians, *Acts* 26. 28. It were tedious to speak particularly to each of these things, and to clear it up, that they are all but rotten ware: I shall condescend upon some few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Christ, doth differ from hypocrites and reprobates. (1.) Whatsoever change be in hypocrites, yet their heart is not changed, and made new. The new heart is onely given to the Elect, when they are converted, and brought under the bond of the Covenant, *Jer.*32.39. *Ezek.* 36.26. Hypocrites did never apprehend Christ as the onely satisfying good in all the world, for which with joy, they would quit all: for then the Kingdom of God were entered in them, *Mat.* 13.44. The truly renewed man dare and can upon good ground say, and hath a testimony of it

it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking up of Chriſt, and hath been led out after him, as the onely enriching Treaſure, in whom to be found, he accounteth all things elſe loſſe and dung, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. (2.) Whatſoever reformation or profeſſion Hypocrites do attain unto, as it cometh not from a new heart, and pure principle of zeal for God, ſo it is always for ſome wicked and by-end, as to be ſeen of men, *Mat.* 6. 5. or to evite and ſhun ſome outward ſtrait, to be free of Gods wrath, and the trouble of their own conſcience, *Iſa.* 59. 3. *Mal.* 3. 14. In teſtimony of this, they never have reſpect to all known commands, elſe they ſhould never be aſhamed, *Pſ.* 119. 6. nor do they without approved guile in their own heart, reſolve againſt every known iniquity; elſe they were freed of heart-condemnings, and ſo might juſtly have confidence before God, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. If in never ſo mean a caſe, they did from a principle of love unto, and of zeal for Chriſt, and for a right end, confeſs and profeſs him, Chriſt were obliged by his own word to confeſs them before his Father, *Mat.* 10. 30. (3.) Whatſoever length Hypocrites advance in that work, by which the people are led in unto Chriſt, yet they never ſeek, *Firſt*, the Kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, *Mat.* 6. 33. the one thing that is neceſſary, (*viz.*) Chriſts friendſhip and fellowſhip, is never their *one* thing, and heart-ſanctifying choice; elſe that better part would

would never be taken from them, *Luk.* 10. 42. (4.) Whatsoever counterfeits of grace are in hypocrites, yet they are all bred there, without any saving work of the Spirit of Christ, and it is enough to exclude them from the benefit of this mark, that they are never denied to those things, nor emptied of them, but still do rest on them as their saviour, so that they submit not unto the righteousnes of God, *Rom.* 10. 3. and that is enough to keep them at a distance from Christ, who will never clout that old garment of hypocrites with his fine new linnen, nor put his new wine in these old bottles, *Mat.* 9. 16. 17. (5.) We may say, let Hypocrites, Reprobates, or Athiests have what they can, they want the three great essentials of Religon and true Christianity: First, They are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their righteousnes, the length of self-loathing, yet lying open for releif. Such lost ones Christ came to seek and save, *Luk.* 19. 10. Secondly, They never took up Christ Jesus as the only treasure and jewel that can onely enrich, and should satisfie, and therefore have never cordially agreed unto Gods device in the Covenant, and so are not worthy of him; neither hath the Kingdome of God savingly entred into their heart, *Mat.* 13. 44. Thirdly, They never in earnest do close with Christs whole yoke without exception, judging all his will just and good, holy and spiritual, as *Rom.* 7. 12. and therefore

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no reſt allowed on them by Chriſt, *Mat.* 11. 29. Therefore whoſoever thou art who canſt lay clear and juſt claim to theſe three foreſaid things, thou art beyond the reach of all atheiſts, hypocrites and rebrobates in the world, as having anſwered the great ends and intents of Law and Goſpel.

Object. *I am clear ſometimes, I think to lay claim to that mark of the new creature; yet at other times, ſin doth ſo prevail over me, that I am made to queſtion all the work within me.*

Anſw. It is much to be lamented, that people profeſſing his Name, ſhould be ſo ſlighted and enſlaved by tranſgreſſion as many are. Yet in anſwer to the objection, if it be ſeriouſly propounded, we ſay, the Saints are found in Scripture juſtly laying claim unto God and his Covenant, when iniquity did prevail over them, as we find, *Pſal.* 65. 3. *Iniquities prevail againſt me; as for our tranſgreſſions, thou wilt do them away.* Rom. 7. 25. *Paul* thanks God through Chriſt, when a law in his members leads him captive unto ſin; But for the better underſtanding, and ſafe application of ſuch truths, we muſt difference betwixt groſs outbreakings and ordinary infirmities, or ſins that come unawars upon a man, without fore-thought or any deliberation. As for the former ſort, it is hard for a man, whilſt he is under the power of them, to ſee his gracious change, although it be in him, and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in ſome meaſure recovered,

and

and begging ſeriouſly to reſent ſuch ſins, and to reſolve againſt them. We find *David* calling himſelf Gods ſervant, quickly after his numbering of Gods people, but he was then under the ſerious reſentment of ſin, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *Jonah* layeth claim to God as his Maſter under his rebellion, but he is then ruing it, and in a ſpirit of revenge againſt himſelf for his ſin, *Jon.* 1,9,10,12. Next, as for theſe ſins of infirmity, and daily incurſion, and heart ills, ſuch as thoſe whereof *Paul* doth complain (it is like) were. We ſhall draw out ſome things from that ſeventh Chapter to the *Romans*, whereupon *Paul* maintains his intereſt in Chriſt; and if you can apply them, it is well. (1.) When *Paul* findeth that he doth much fail, and cannot reach conformity to Gods Law, he doth not blame the Law, as being too ſtrict, ſo as men cannot keep it, as Hypocrites uſe to ſpeak; but he doth blame himſelf as being carnal; and he ſaith of the Law, that it is Good, Holy and Spiritual, *Rom.* 7. 12, 14. (2.) He can ſay, he failed of a good which he intended, and did out-ſhoot himſelf, and he had often honeſtly reſolved againſt the evil which he fell into, *Rom.* 7.15,18,19. (3.) He ſaith that the prevailing ſin over him is his exerciſe, ſo as he judgeth himſelf wretched, becauſe of ſuch a body of death, from which he longeth to be delivered, *Rom.* 7. 24. (4.) He ſaith, that whilſt he is under the power and law of ſin, There is ſomewhat in the bottom

of

of his heart oppoſing it, although over-maſtered by it, which would be another way, and when that gets the upper hand, it is a delightſome thing, *Rom.* 7. 22, 25. upon theſe things he thanks God in Chriſt, that there is no condemnation, *Rom.* 7. 25. *Rom.* 8. 1. Now, then look if ye can lay claim to theſe things. (1.) If you do blame your ſelf, and approve the Law, whilſt you fail. (2.) If you can ſay that you do often reſolve againſt ſin honeſtly, and without known guile, and do ſo reſolve the contrary good before the evil break in upon you. (3.) If you can ſay, that you are ſo far exerciſed with your failings as to judge your ſelf wretched, becauſe of ſuch things, and a body of death, which is the Root and Fountain of ſuch things. (4.) If you can ſay, that there is a party within you oppoſing theſe evils, which would be at the right way, and, as it were, is in its Element, when it is in Gods way, it is well; onely be adviſed not to take reſt untill in ſome meaſure, you be rid of the ground of this objection, or at leaſt, untill you can very clearly ſay, you are waging war with theſe things: Now a good help againſt the prevailing power of ſin, is, to cleave cloſe to Chriſt Jeſus by Faith, which as it is a deſirable part of ſanctification, and a notable piece of Conformity to Gods will, and moſt ſubſervient unto his deſign in the Goſpel, *Gal.* 2. 20, 21. and ſo ſhould be much endeavoured by people, as a work pleaſing

ſing unto God, *Joh.* 6. 29. So it is the ready way to draw life and ſap from Chriſt, the bleſſed root for fruitfulneſs in all caſes, as *Joh.* 15. 4, 5.

Object. *I do not partake of theſe ſpecial communications of God, mentioned in the Scripture and actings and outgoings of his Spirit, wherein gracious people often are ſpeaking, and whereunto they attain; the want of theſe things maketh me much ſuſpect my ſtate.*

Anſw. I ſhall ſhortly hint ſome of theſe excellent communications, and Ihope upon a right diſcovery of them there will be but ſmall ground found for the jealous complaints of many gracious people.

Firſt, (beſides theſe convictions of the Spirit of God, which uſe to uſher Chriſts way unto the ſouls of men, and theſe alſo which afterward do ordinarily attend them) there is a Seal of the Spirit of God ſpoken of in Scripture, the principal thing whereof is the Sanctifying work of the holy Ghoſt, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of Gods Image, and revealed will upon man, as a ſeal or ſignet doth leave an impreſſion and ſtamp of its likeneſs upon the thing ſealed; ſo it is, 2. *Tim.* 2. 19. *The foundation of God—— having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them who are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity*: And thus I conceive, the Seal to be called a Witneſs, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. *He that believeth*

believeth, hath the witneſs in himſelf, that is, the grounds upon which an intereſt in Chriſt is to be made out and proved, are in every believer; for he hath ſomewhat of the ſanctifying work of Gods Spirit in him, which is a ſure (although not always a clear and manifeſt) witneſs.

Secondly, There is communion with God, much talked of among Chriſtians, whereby they underſtand the ſenſible preſence of God, refreſhing the ſoul exceedingly; but if we ſpeak properly, communion with God, is a mutual intereſt between God and Man, who hath cloſed with him in Chriſt. It is a commonneſs, or a common intereſt between God and a Man; not only is a man intereſted in God himſelf, but in all that is the Lords; ſo the Lord hath a ſpecial intereſt in the man, and alſo all that belongs to him. There is a communion between Husband and Wife, whereby they have a ſpecial intereſt in other perſons, goods, gear, and concernments; ſo is it here: there is ſuch a Communion with God. He is our God, and all things are ours, becauſe he is ours; this Communion with God, all true believers have at all times, as we ſhall ſhew afterwards: I grant there is an actual improvement of that communion, whereby men do boldly meddle with any thing that belongs unto God, and do meddle with himſelf as their own, with much homelineſs and familiarity, eſpecially in worſhip: when the ſoul doth converſe with a living God, partaking

of

of the Divine Nature, growing like unto him, and ſweetly travelling through his attributes, and, with ſome confidence of intereſt, viewing theſe things, as the mans own goods and gear: this we call Communion with God in Ordinances. This indeed is not ſo ordinarily nor frequently made out to men, and all his people do not equally partake of it; and it is true, that what is in God, goeth not out for the behoof of the man, to his apprehenſion equally at all times; yet certainly Communion with God, properly ſo called, (*viz.*) that commoneſs of intereſt between God and a man, who is ſavingly in Covenant with him, doth always ſtand firm and ſure; and ſo much of Communion with God in Ordinances, have all Believers, as that their heart converſeth with a Living God there now and then, and is in ſome meaſure changed into that ſame Image, and there needeth be no doubt any further about it.

Thirdly, There is a thing which is called fellowſhip with God, often miſtaken alſo among believers. If by fellowſhip, be meant the walking in our duty, as in the ſight of a living God, who ſeeth and heareth us, and is witneſs to all our carriage. It is a thing common unto all gracious men, they have it habitually, and in deſign, *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord alwayes before me*; yea, and often they have it actually in exerciſe, when their ſpirit is in any good frame; they walk, as if they ſaw God ſtanding by them, and have

have ſome thoughts of his favour through Chriſt; *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son*, 1 John 1. 3. If we by *Fellowſhip*, do mean a ſweet, refreſhing, familiar, ſenſible converſing with God, which doth delight and refreſh the ſoul, (beſide what the conſcience of duty doth.) It is then a walking in the light of his countenance, and a good part of ſenſible preſence; and although it ſeemeth *Enoch* had much of it, *whilſt it is ſaid he walked with God*, *Gen.* 5. 24. yet it is not ſo ordinary as the former, nor ſo common to all Chriſtians; for here the ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs, following hard after its guide, and ſingularly upheld by his right hand, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 8.

Fourthly, There is a thing which is called acceſs unto God, and this I take to be the removing of obſtructions out of the way between a Man and God, ſo as the man is admitted to come near. We are ſaid to have acceſs to a great perſon, when doors are caſt open, guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come cloſe at him; ſo it is here. Now this acceſs in Scripture, is ſometimes taken for Chriſts preparing of the way, the removing of enmity between God and Sinners, *ſo as men now have a patent way to come unto God through Chriſt*, *Epheſ.* 2. 18. Sometimes it is taken for the actual improvement of that acceſs purchaſed by Chriſt, when a man

finds all obstructions and differences, which do ordinarily fall in between him and God, removed; God is not uncouth to him, nor as a stranger, keeping up himself from him, or frowning on him, *but the man is admitted to come even unto his seat*, as *Job* 23. 3. Of the want of this doth *Job* complain, *Job* 23. 8, 9. whilst he saith, *I go forward, backward, to the right and left hand, and I find him not.* The first sort of access is common to all Believers, they are brought near by the blood of the Covenant, and are no more far off, as the deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But access, in the other sense, is dispensed more, according to the Lords absolute soveraignty and pleasure, and it is lest in the power of Believers to obstruct it unto themselves, until it please the Lord mercifully and freely to grant it unto them again; so it is up and down, and there needs be no question (as to mans state) about it.

Fifthly, There is a thing called liberty before God, and this properly is freedom, or free speaking unto God, many do much question their state, because of the want of this now and then, since the Scripture hath said, *where the Spirit is there is liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 17. but they do justly confine that liberty, spoken of there, unto this free speaking before God. I grant where the Spirit of the Lord doth savingly discover Gods will in

the Scripture to a man, There is liberty from any obligation to the Ceremonial Law, and from the condemning power of the Moral Law, and from much of that groſs darkneſs and ignorance, which is on natural hearts as a vail hiding Chriſt in the Goſpel from them. I grant alſo, that ſometimes, even this liberty which is a free communion with God, *and ordering of our caſe before him, and filling of our mouths with Arguments*, Job 23. 4. is granted to the godly, but not as liberty taken in the former ſenſes. Although *the Lord hath obliged himſelf to pour out the Spirit of prayer upon all the houſe of* David, *in ſome meaſure*, Zech. 12. 10. Yet this communication of the Spirit, which we call liberty, or free ſpeaking unto God, dependeth much on the Lords abſolute pleaſure, when, and what meaſure to allow it. This liberty which we call freedom, or free ſpeaking with God in prayer, is ſometimes much abſtracted from any great confidence in the time of prayer, (at leaſt, until it draw towards the cloſe of it) it ſtandeth much in a vivacity of the underſtanding to take up the caſe which a man is to ſpeak before God, ſo as he can order his cauſe; and next, there be words or verbal expreſſions, elegant, ſuitable, and very emphatical, or powerful and pithy; there is alſo joyned a fervency of ſpirit in prayer, whereof the Scripture ſpeaketh; the ſoul is hot and bended, and very

Intent: There is also ordinarily in this liberty, a special melting of the heart (often joyned with a great measure of the Spirit of grace and supplication, *Zech.* 12. 11.) for so the soul is poured out before God as for a first-born: such is the liberty, which many Saints get before God, whilst in much brokenness of heart, and fervency of spirit, they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a Living God, noticing (at least) their Prayer. Sometimes this liberty is joyned with confidence, and then it is not only a free, but also a bold speaking before God; *it is that boldness with confidence, Ephes.* 3. 12. this is more rarely imparted unto men then the former, yet it is ordinary. It hath in it, beside what we spake before, some influence of the Spirit upon faith, making it put out some vigorous acting in prayer; there is a sweet mournfull frame of Spirit, by which a man poureth out his heart in Gods bosome, and with some confidence of his Favour and good will, pleadeth his cause before him, *as a living God*; and this is all the sensible presence that many Saints do attain unto; there is no ground of doubt about a mans estate in point of liberty before God in this last sense, because there is nothing essential to the making up of a gracious state here: some have it, some want; some have it at sometimes, and not at other times; so that it is much up and down; yet I may say, gracious men

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may do much (by a very ordinary influence) contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping of such a frame of spirit.

Sixthly, There is a thing called influence, or *breathing of the Spirit*. This gracious influence (for of such only do I now speak) is either ordinary, and this is the operation of the holy Spirit on the Soul, and the habits of grace there, whereby they are still kept alive, and in some exercise and acting, although not very discernable. This influence (I conceive) doth alwayes attend Believers, *and is that keeping and watering night and day, and every moment*, promised, *Isa.* 27. 3. Or, this influence is more singular and special, and is the same to a gracious (although a withered) soul, *as the winde and breath to the dry bones, putting them in good case*, *Ezek.* 37. 9, 10. *And as the dew or rain to the grass, or newly mowen field and parched ground*, *Psal.* 72. 6. Such influence is meant, *Cant.* 4. 16. *by the blowing of the South wind, making the Spices to flow out*. When the *Spirit* moveth thus, there is an edge put upon the graces of God in the soul, and they are made to act more vigorously. This *is the inlarging of the heart, by which a man doth run in the ways of God*, *Psal.* 119. 32. This influence is more discernable then the former, and not so ordinarily communicated. Also here, sometimes the wind bloweth more upon one

grace, and ſometimes more diſcernably upon another, and often upon many of the graces together; and according to the leſſer, or greater meaſure of this influence, the ſoul acteth more or leſs vigorouſly towards God: and ſince faith is a created grace in the ſoul, this influence of the Spirit is upon it, ſometimes leſs, ſometimes more, and accordingly is the aſſurance of faith, ſmall or great.

Seventhly, There is the hearing of prayer often ſpoken of in Scripture, and many vex themſelves about it, alleadging that they know nothing of it experimentally. I grant there is a favourable hearing of prayer: But we muſt remember it is twofold.

Either, 1. It is ſuch as a man is ſimply to believe by way of argument on Scriptural grounds. As if I be fled unto Chriſt, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, *not regarding iniquity in my heart*, exerciſing faith about the thing I pray for, abſolutely or conditionally, according to the nature of the thing and promiſes about it. I am obliged to beleive that God heareth my prayer, *and will give what is good, according to the Scriptures*, *Joh.* 14.13,14. *Whatſoever ye ask in my name, I will do it*, 1 John 5.14. *This is our confidence, that whatſoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us*, Mark 11. 24. Believe that you receive, and you ſhall have

have what you desire, *Psal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity, he will not hear.* Then if I regard not iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me.

Or, 2. A man doth sensibly perceive that God heareth his prayer. It is made out to his heart without any sylogistical deduction. Such a hearing of prayer got *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1.8. *Her countenance was no more sad.* Surely the Lord did breath upon her faith, and made her believe that she was heard, and she could not make it out by any argument; for she had not grounds whereupon to build the premises of the argument according to Scripture in that particular. God did stamp it in some way upon her heart sensibly, and so made her believe it. This is but rarely granted, especially in cases clearly deducible in Scripture. And therefore people are much to be satisfied in exercising their faith about the other, and let God give of this latter what he pleaseth. A mans gracious state should not be brought upon debate, upon the account of such hearing of prayer.

Eighthly, There is assurance of Gods favour by the witnessing of our own spirits; which assurance, is deduced by way of argument sylogistically; Thus, *Whosoever believeth on Christ shall never perish; But I do believe on Christ; Therefore I shall never perish. Whose hath respect unto*

all Gods Commandments, ſhall never be aſhamed; But I have reſpect unto all his Commands: Therefore I ſhall never be aſhamed. I ſay, by reaſoning thus, and comparing Spiritual things with ſpiritual things, a man may attain unto a good certainty of his Gracious State. It is ſuppoſed, 1 *John* 3. 18, 19. That by loving the Brethren in deed and in truth, we may aſſure our hearts before God, and *that a man may rejoyce upon the Teſtimony of a Good Conſcience*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. A man may have confidence, if his heart do not condemn him, 1 *John* 3. 21. We may then attain unto ſome aſſurance (although not full aſſurance) by the witneſſe of our own ſpirit. I do not deny, that in this witneſſing of our Spirits towards aſſurance, there is ſome concurrence of the Spirit of God. But, I conceive there needeth but a very ordinary influence, without which we can do nothing. Now, this aſſurance, ſuch as it is, may be reached by intelligent Believers, who keep a good conſcience in their walk. So I hope, there needs be no debate about it, as to a mans gracious ſtate; for if a man will clear himſelf of heart condemnings, he will ſpeedily reach this aſſurance.

Ninthly, There is a witneſſing of *Gods Spirit*, mentioned, *Rom.* 8. 16. *A bearing witneſſe with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* This operation

operation of the Spirit is beſt underſtood, if we produce any ſyllogiſm by which our Spirit doth witneſs our Sonſhip; as for example, Whoſoever loveth the Brethren, *is paſt from Death to Life*, and conſequently is in Chriſt: But I love the Brethren; Therefore I am paſſed from Death to Life. Here there is a threefold operation of the Spirit, or Three Operations rather.

The firſt is a beam of *Divine Light* upon the firſt Propoſition, perſwading the *Divine Authority* of it as the Word of God; the *Spirit of the Lord* muſt witneſs the *Divinity of the Scripture*, and that is the infallible Word of God, far beyond all other arguments can be uſed for it.

The ſecond Operation is, *A Glorious beam of Light from the Spirit, ſhining upon the ſecond propoſition*, and ſo upon *his own graces in the Soul*, diſcovering them to be true graces, and ſuch as the Scripture calleth ſo. Thus are we ſaid to know *by his Spirit, the things freely given to us of God*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13.

The third Operation is, *in order to the third propoſition of the Argument, or the Concluſion*; and this I conceive, to be nothing elſe, but *an influence upon Faith, ſtrengthning it to draw a concluſion of full aſſurance upon the foreſaid premiſes*. Now (with ſubmiſſion unto others, who have greater light in the Scripture, and more experience of

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theſe precious communications) I do conceive the Witneſs of the Spirit, or witneſs of it, which is mentioned, *Rom.* 8. 16. Is not that firſt operation upon the firſt propoſition; for that operation is that teſtimony of the Spirit, by which he beareth witneſs to the Divinity of the whole Scripture, and aſſerteth the Divine authority of it unto the ſouls of gracious men; and ſuch an operation may be upon a truth of Scripture, which doth not relate to a mans ſonſhip or intereſt in Chriſt at all. The Spirit may ſo ſhine upon any truth, relating to duty, or any other fundamental truth perſwading the Divinity of it, upon and unto the ſoul, and ſpeaking nothing relating to a mans intereſt in Chriſt. Neither is the third operation of the Spirit, by which he makes faith boldly draw the concluſion. This witneſſing of the Spirit, for that operation is nothing elſe but influence upon faith, bringing it out to full aſſurance but that whereupon this full aſſurance is drawn or put out, is ſomewhat deponed and witneſſed already. Therefore I conceive the ſecond operation of the Spirit upon the ſecond prepoſition, and ſo upon the graces in the man, is that witneſs of Gods Spirit, that beam of divine light, ſhining upon thoſe graces, whereby they are made very conſpicuous to the underſtanding; That is the witneſs, the ſhining ſo on them in his witneſſing: for onely here in this prepoſition and in this operation

ration, doth the Spirit of God prove a co-witneſs with our ſpirit: For, the main thing wherein the witneſs of our ſpirit lyeth, is the ſecond propoſition, and ſo the Spirit of God, witneſſing with our ſpirits, is alſo in that ſame propoſition. So theſe two witneſſes, having deponed and witneſſed one and the ſame thing, *viz.* The truth and reality of ſuch and ſuch graces in the man, which our own ſpirit or conſcience doth depone, according to its knowledge, and the Spirit of the Lord doth certainly affirm and witneſs to be ſo. There is a ſentence drawn forth, and a concluſion of the mans ſonſhip, by the mans faith, breathed upon by the ſpirit for that effect, and this concluſion beareth the full aſſurance of a mans ſonſhip. It may be preſumed, that ſome true Saints do not partake of this all their dayes, as *Heb.* 2. 15.

Tenthly, I ſpeak with the experience of many Saints, and, I hope, according to Scripture. If I ſay, there is a communication of the Spirit of God which is let out to ſome of his people ſometimes; it is ſomewhat beſide, if not beyond, that witneſſing of a ſonſhip ſpoken of before. It is a glorious divine manifeſtation of God unto the ſoul, ſhedding abroad Gods love in the heart; It is a thing better felt then ſpoken of; It is no audible voice, but it is a waffe of glory, filling the ſoul with God, as he is life, light, love, and liberty, countervailing that audible voice, *O man greatly*

greatly beloved, Dan. 9. 22. 33. putting a man in a transport with this on his heart, *It is good to be here*, as Mat. 17. 4. It is that which went out from Christ to *Mary*, when He but mentioned her name, *John* 20. 16. he had spoken some words to her before, and she understood not that it was he: But when he uttered this one word, *MARY*, there was some admirable divine conveyance and manifestation made out unto her heart, by which she was so satisfyingly filled, that there was no place for arguing and disputing, whether or not, that was Christ, and if she had any interest in him. That manifestation made faith to it self, and did purchase credit and trust to it self, and was equivalent with, *Thus saith the Lord.* This is such a glance of glory, that it may in the highest sence, be called the earnest, or first fruits of the inheritance: for, it is a felt armful of the Holy God, almost wholly conforming the man unto his likeness, so swallowing him up, that he forgetteth all things, except the present manifestation: O how glorious is this manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here riseth to so full an assurance, that it resolveth wholly into sensible embracements of God. This is the thing which doth best deserve the title of sensible presence. And it is like, is not given unto all Believers, some whereof are all their dayes under bondage, and in fear, *Hebr.* 2. 15. But here love, almost perfect

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caſteth out fear. This is ſo abſolutely ſet out upon the Maſters pleaſure, and ſo tranſient and paſſing, or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious ſtate upon debate for want of it.

Eleventhly, There is a thing we call peace, about which many do vex themſelves. This peace is either about a mans ſtate, that he is reconciled unto God by Jeſus Chriſt, or it is about his preſent caſe and condition, that he is walking ſo, as approved of God, at leaſt, ſo far, as there is no quarrel or controverſie between God and him threatning a ſtroke: both of theſe, are either ſuch in the court of Scripture, and conſequently in Gods account, or in the court of a mans own conſcience. Peace, about a mans ſtate, as being in Chriſt, is ſure in the court of Scripture, and of Heaven, when a man doth by Faith cloſe with Chriſt and the New Covenant, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* It being ſure and ſolid in the court of Scripture, it ſhould hold ſure in the court of mans conſcience, it being rightly informed; for in that caſe, it ſtill ſpeaks according to Scripture: but, becauſe often the conſcience is miſ-informed, and in the dark, therefore there is often peace about a mans ſtate according to Scripture, whilſt his conſcience doth threaten the contrary, and doth ſtill condemn, and refuſeth to aſſoil the man, as being reconci-

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led unto God through Chriſt. In this caſe the conſcience muſt be informed, and the mans gracious ſtate made out by the marks of grace, as we ſhewed before; and here the witneſs of my own ſpirit, will do much to allay the cry of the conſcience; and if the Spirit of the Lord joyn his witneſs and teſtimony, the conſcience is perfectly ſatisfied, and proclaimeth peace to the man. The other peace, about a mans preſent caſe or condition, *viz.* That it is approved of God in a Goſpel ſenſe, it may be wanting, and juſtly wanting, although the other peace about a mans ſtate be ſure. This peace about a mans caſe and condition, it is either ſuch in the court of Scripture, and this is when a man is not regarding iniquity, and expecting the Commands of God without exception; then the Scripture ſaith, he ſtands in an even place, and he needeth fear no ſtated quarrel between God and him, in order to a temporary ſtroak; and when it is thus, his conſcence ſhould alſo abſoil him that ſame way; and would do ſo, if it were rightly informed; but becauſe the conſcience is often in the dark, therefore a man may be alarm'd with evil in the court of conſcience, as if he were juſtly to expect a ſtroak from God becauſe of his ſin, and ſome quarel God hath at him, although he intends ſalvation for him; this is enough to keep a man in diſquier, and to inhibit him, the rejoycing allowed upon him,

him, whilſt he is walking in his integrity: therefore a man muſt here alſo inform his conſcience, and receive no accuſations, nor condemnings from it, unleſs it make them clear by Scripture, at that Bar; let every man ſtand both about his ſtate, and his condition, or caſe; and let him appeal from all other courts to that, and not receive any indictment but conform to the truth of God, by which the conſcience is to proceed in all things; and if this were well lookt unto, there would not be ſo many groundleſs ſuſpicions, amongſt the Lords people, either about their ſtate, or condition upon every thought which entereth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the joy of the holy Ghoſt, and this is when the ſpirit doth breath upon our rejoycing in God (which is a grace very little in exerciſe with many) and maketh it ſet out ſenſibly and vigorouſly; and he exciteth and ſtirreth the paſſion of joy and delight in the ſoul, ſo as there is an unſpeakable and glorious joy in the ſoul, in the apprehenſion of Gods friendſhip and nearneſs unto him, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. This joy followeth upon peace, and peace followeth righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 14. 17. This joy readily will not fail to be according to the meaſure of the aſſurance of Faith, as 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *In whom believing, ye rejoyce, &c.* So that the removal of miſtakes about other things, will allay doubts about this.

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Now, becauſe ſome of theſe excellent communications of the ſpirit, after they are gone, are brought in queſtion, as deluſions of Satan. For vindication of them we ſay, that the ſpecial operations of Gods Spirit in any high degree, uſually are communicated to people after ſuch brokenneſs of Spirit, *Pſal.* 51. 8. after ſo ſingular pains in Religious Duty, *Dan.* 9. 3. 21. or in time of ſuch ſuffering for righteouſneſs, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. or if they break in as the rain that waiteth not for man, then they do ſo humble and abaſe the perſon, *Iſa.* 6. 5. and there are found ſo many evidences of grace in the man, *Rom.* 8. 16. or theſe things do ſo provoke unto holineſs, and ſo have every thing anſwerable, and conform unto theſe manifeſtations of God, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. the perſon under them doth ſo loath all things beſide Gods friendſhip and fellowſhip, *Mat.* 17. 4. and theſe things do carry on them and with them ſo much authority, and divine ſuperſcription, whilſt they are in the Soul, that afterwards they may appear ſufficiently to be ſpecial communications of God, and ſinguſar gracious operations of his ſpirit, and no deluſions of Satan transforming himſelf into an Angel of light, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14. nor ſuch common flaſhes of the ſpirit, as may admit afterwards irrecoverable Apoſtacy from God, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. Now then, to conclude this part of the work that relateth unto tryal; I ſay, to all theſe who

who complain of the want of the precious outlettings of the Spirit. 1. Bleſſe God if you want nothing eſſential for making out of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt. God hath given unto you Chriſt Jeſus, the greateſt gift he had, and ſince your heart is ſhapen out for him, he will with him, give you all things that are good for you in their ſeaſon. 2. I do believe, upon a right ſearch and tryal, after you have underſtood the communications of the Spirit, you are not ſo great a ſtranger to many things, as you did ſuſpect your ſelf to be. But 3. Remember the promiſes of life, and of peace with God, are now here in Scripture made unto theſe ſpecial things whereof you alledge the want: The promiſes are made unto Faith, followed with holineſs; and it may be preſumed, that many heirs of glory do not in this life partake of ſome of theſe things, but are in bondage all their dayes through fear of death, *Heb.* 2. 15. ſo that there ſhould be no miſtake about theſe things: we may ſeek after them, but God is free to give or withhold them. 4. Many do ſeek after ſuch manifeſtations before they give credit by faith unto Gods Word; He hath born record that there is life enough for men in Chriſt Jeſus, and if men would by believing ſet to their ſeal, that God is *true*, they ſhould partake of more of theſe *excellent things*. 5. I may ſay, many have not honourable apprehenſions and thoughts of the ſpirit of God, whoſe proper work it is, to put out the foreſaid

noble operations: they do not adore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench, and resist him, and many people complaining of the want of these things, are not at the pains to seek the spirit in his out-goings, and few do set themselves apart for such precious receits: Therefore be at more pains in Religion, give more credit to his Word, and esteem more highly of the Spirit of God, and so you may find more of these excellent things.

How

How to attain unto A Saving Intereſt in CHRIST.

HAving in the former part of this Treatiſe put every mans ſtate to tryal; It now remains, that in this following part, we give advice to thoſe, who neither can, nor dare lay claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

Queſt. *What ſhall they do who want the marks of a true and ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, already ſpoken of, and neither can nor dare pretend unto them?*

Anſw. If men miſs in themſelves the marks of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of before; Then it is their duty, and of all that hear this Goſpel, *perſonally and heartily to cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus*, and this ſhall ſecure their ſtate.

For the better underſtanding of this, we ſhall premiſe ſome things for information of theſe who are more ignorant, and then ſpeak more directly to the thing. As for the things to be premiſed.

1. The Lord did at the beginning, out of his bounty, make a Covenant with man in *Adam*, *Gen.* 2. 17. and did enable man to abide in that Covenant, *Eccl.* 7.29. But man by eating of that forbidden fruit, *Gen.* 3. did break the Covenant, *Hoſ.* 6. 7. and made it void for ever, *Rom.* 3.20. and involved himſelf into all miſery thereby, *Rom.* 5.12,2. The Lord did moſt freely, from everlaſting, purpoſe and intend to ſave men another way, *viz.* by Chriſt Jeſus, and the Covenant of grace, in which he intended reconcilement with the Elect, through Chriſt Jeſus (God and Man, born of a woman in due time, to make this agreement effectual.) And this device ſatisfying his own juſtice, and ſaving of the Elect by Chriſt, he did at firſt intimate to our parents in Paradiſe, *Gen.* 3. 15. where he ſaith, that the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpents head: and the Lord hath in all Generations made this known to his Church. 3. The Lord hath in all ages Covenanted to be the reconciled God of all theſe, who by their ſubjection to his Ordinances, did profeſs their ſatisfaction with this device, and oblige themſelves to acquieſce in the ſame, and to ſeek ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, as God doth offer him in the Goſpel: ſo all the people of *Iſrael* are called the Lords People, and are ſaid to avouch him to be their God, and he doth avouch them to be his People, *Exod.* 19. 5. 8. *Deut.* 26. 17, 18. yea, the Lord doth alſo engage himſelf,

ſelf to be the God of the ſeed and children of theſe who do ſo ſubject to his Ordinances. The Covenant is ſaid to be made between God and all the People, young and old, preſent and not preſent that day, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11--15. and all are appointed to come under ſome ſeal of that Covenant, as was enjoyned to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 7. 10. nor only was it ſo in the Old Teſtament, but it is ſo in the New Teſtament alſo. The Lord makes offer of himſelf, to be our God in Chriſt Jeſus, and the people profeſſing their ſatisfaction in that offer, and in Teſtimony thereof, ſubjecting themſelves unto the Ordinances, they are reckoned a Covenanted people, and are joyned unto his Church in Thouſands, receiving a ſeal of the Covenants, without any further particular previous trial, *Act.* 2. 38, 41. 4. Many do deal treacherouſly with God in this Covenant, *Pſal.* 78. 36, 37. and although they profeſſe their eſtimation of Chriſt the Saviour, and heart-ſatisfaction with that device of ſaving ſinners by him, and having the Image of God reſtored by him, in them; yet their heart is not right with God, and they do content themſelves with an empty title, of being in a ſealed Covenant with God, *John* 8. 39. *Abraham* is our Father (ſay they) For although the Lord obligeth every man who profeſſeth his ſatisfaction with Chriſt Jeſus the deviſed ranſom, to be cordial and ſincere herein, and onely to theſe who are ſo, doth

he make out the Spiritual Promiſes of the Covenant, (they onely being priviledged to be the Sons of God, who do really receive Chriſt) *John* 1. 12. yet the Lord doth permit many to profeſſe their cloſing with him in Chriſt, both in the Old and New Teſtament, whilſt their heart is not engaged; and he doth admit them to be members of his Church, granting unto them the uſe of Ordinances, and many other external mercies and Priviledges denyed unto the Heathen, who are not in Covenant with him. 5. Although the great part of people do fooliſhly fancy, that they have cloſed with God in Chriſt Jeſus ſincerely and heartily, or at leaſt, they do without any ground or warrant, promiſe a new heart to themſelves before they depart this life; yet there be but very few, who do really and cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus, as he is offered in the Goſpel; and ſo there be but very few ſaved, as is clear, *Mat.* 7. 14. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it*, Mat. 20. 16. *Many are called, but few are choſen.* If people would believe this, it might help to alarm them. 6. Although none at all do cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus, and acquieſce in that ranſome found out by God, except onely ſuch as are elected, *Rom.* 11. 7. and whoſe hearts the Lord doth ſoveraignly determine to that bleſſed choice, *John* 6. 44. yet the Lord hath left it as a duty

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upon people who hear this Goſpel, to cloſe with his offer of Salvation through Chriſt Jeſus, as if it were in their power to do it. And the Lord, through theſe Commands and Exhortations (wherein he obligeth men to the thing) doth convey life and ſtrength to the elect, and doth therein convey the new heart unto them, which pointeth kindly towards this new device of ſaving ſinners, and towards Chriſt in his Covenant relations; or, it is the Lords mind in theſe commands and invitations, to put people on ſome duty, with which he uſeth to concur for accompliſhing that buſineſs between him and them; ſo then, it is a coming on our part, and yet a drawing on his part, *John* 6. 44. it is a drawing on his part, and a running on our part, *Cant.* 1. 4. it is an approaching on our part, and yet a chuſing and cauſing to approach on his part, *Pſal.* 65. 4. it is a believing, or receiving on our part, *John* 1. 12. and yet it is given us to believe, *Phil.* 1. 29.

Having premiſed theſe things, I ſay, if men miſs in themſelves the marks of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of in the former part of the Treatiſe; then for ſecuring their ſtate, they are obliged with all diligence perſonally and heartily to accept of and cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the Goſpel. In handling of this, we ſhall 1. ſhew what it is to accept of, and cloſe with that noble inven-

tion. 2. We ſhall ſhew, that it is the neceſſary duty of thoſe who would be in favour with God, and ſecure their Souls. 3. What is previouſly required of thoſe who perform this duty. 4. What are the qualifications and properties of this duty, if rightly managed. 5. What be the native conſequents of it, if it be performed aright.

As for the *firſt*, *What is it to cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the Goſpel?* Here we muſt remember (as we ſhewed before) that at firſt God willed man to abide in his favour, by holding faſt his firſt integrity in which he was Created; but man by his tranſgreſſion loſt Gods favour, made void that Covenant of Works, and put himſelf in an utter incapacity to regain the Lords friendſhip, which he had loſt by his ſin, and to reſcue himſelf from the curſe and wrath now due to him for the ſame, or any way to procure his own ſalvation: But the Lord freely hath manifeſted another way of repairing mans loſt eſtate, *viz.* by ſending his Son Chriſt Jeſus in the fleſh to ſatisfie his juſtice for the ſins of the Elect, and to reſtore in them his Image now defaced, and to bring them unto glory; and he hath made open Proclamation in the Church, *That whoſoever will lay aſide all thoughts of ſaving themſelves by the Covenant of Works, or inherent righteouſneſs, and will agree heartily to be ſaved by Chriſt Jeſus;*

ſus; they ſhall be reſtored to a better condition, then formerly man was in, and ſhall be ſaved. So then, to cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, is, to quit and forego all thoughts of help or ſalvation by our own Righteouſneſſe, and to agree unto this way which God hath found out: It is to value and highly eſteem of Chriſt Jeſus, as the treaſure ſufficient to enrich poor man, and with the heart to believe this record, *That there is life enough in him for men.* It is to plead this invention, and to acquieſce in it, as the onely way to true happineſſe: It is to point towards this Mediator, as God holdeth him out in the Goſpel, with deſire to lay the ſtreſſe of our whole ſtate on him. This is that which is called Faith or Believing, the receiving of Chriſt, or believing on his Name, *John* 1. 12. This is that believing on the Name of the Lord Jeſus, commanded unto the Jaylor for his ſafety, *Acts* 10. 31. This agreeth to all the deſcriptions of juſtifying faith in the Scripture; this doth anſwer the type of *looking to the Brazen Serpent lifted up in the Wilderneſs*, *John* 3. 14, 15. and this is ſuppoſed in all theſe ordinary actings of Faith; to which, promiſes are annexed in the Scripture, and will be found in all who have got the new heart from God, and it will be found in none elſe.

As to the *Second* thing, *viz. That this is the neceſſary duty of all ſuch who would be in favour with*

with God, and ſecure their Souls. It appeareth thus, 1. This cloſing with Gods device, or believing in Chriſt, is commanded every where in Scripture by the Lord, as the condition of the new Covenant, giving title and right unto all the ſpiritual bleſſings of the ſame; for it is, upon the matter, the receiving of Chriſt: This is commanded, whilſt God bids men *come and buy*; that is impropriate all, by cloſing with that device, *Iſa.* 55. 1. the weary are commanded to come unto him thus for their reſt, *Mat.* 11. 28. *This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son,* 1 *John* 3. 23. this is enough to prove it a duty incumbent. But further, it is ſuch a duty, as onely giveth title and right to a Sonſhip; for, onely they who receive him, are priviledged to be ſons, *John* 1.12. *To as many as received him, to them he gave power to be the ſons of God, even to ſuch as believed on his name.* 2. It appeareth to be the neceſſary duty of all, thus: No leſs then this doth give a meeting unto God, offering himſelf to be our God in Chriſt; and no leſs then this doth anſwer our profeſſion, as we are in Covenant with him, as Members of his viſible Church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Chriſt; if we do not cloſe with the offer, laying aſide all thoughts of other wayes, by which we may attain to happineſs, we give no meeting to him; he ſaith, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him,* *Mat.* 17. 5. If we cloſe not with

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the offer, we give no anſwer unto God. Moreover, *we are all baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of Sins, Acts* 2. 38. Now unleſs we cloſe with Chriſt, as is ſaid, we falſifie that profeſſion; therefore ſince this is the thing which doth anſwer Gods offer in the Goſpel, and make good our profeſſion, as members of his Church, it is a neceſſary duty lying upon us.

3. Whatſoever a man hath elſe, if he do not thus cloſe with Gods device about Chriſt Jeſus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his perſon, or of his performances, or as to the ſaving of his ſoul. Men are accepted only in Chriſt the beloved, *Eph.* 1. 6. *Abel* and his offering are accepted by faith, *Heb.* 11. 4. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, Heb.* 11. 6. and, *He that believeth not, is condemned already, and ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, John* 3. 18. 36. for want of this, no external title doth avail; the Children of the Kingdom are caſt out, if this be wanting, *Mat.* 8. 10, 11, 12. The people of *Iſrael* are like other heathens, in regard of a graceleſs ſtate, lying open to the wrath of God, *Jer.* 9. 25, 26. If men do not believe, that he who was ſlain at *Jeruſalem*, who was called Chriſt Jeſus, and witneſſed unto by the Prophets, and declared to be the Son of God by many mighty works: I ſay, if men do not believe that he is the way, and cloſe not with him as the onely way, *they ſhall dye in their ſins, John* 8. 24.

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We ſay then, it is a moſt neceſſary duty thus to cloſe with *Chriſt Jeſus*, as the bleſſed relief appointed for ſinners; every one who is come to years of underſtanding, and heareth this Goſpel, is obliged to take to heart his own loſt condition, and Gods gracious offer of peace and ſalvation through *Chriſt Jeſus*, and ſpeedily to fly from the wrath to come, by accepting and cloſing with this offer, heartily acquieſcing therein, as a ſatisfying way for ſaving of poor ſinners: And that all may be the more encouraged to ſet about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto them, let them remember that peace and ſalvation is offered to the people in univerſal terms, to all without exception: *If any man will, he ſhall be welcome*, Rev. 22.17. *If any thirſt*, (although after that which will never profit, yet) *they ſhall be welcome here*, on the condition aforeſaid, *Iſa.* 55.2, 3. all are commanded to believe, 1 *John* 3.23. The promiſes are to all who are externally called by the Goſpel; God excludes none, if they do not exclude themſelves, *Acts* 2.39. ſo that if any have a mind for the thing, *they may come forward, he will in no wiſe caſt them out*, *Joh.* 6.37. *being able to ſave to the utmoſt, them who come to God through him*, *Heb.* 7.25. And theſe who have long delaid to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, leſt what belongs to their peace, be hid from their eyes: but all theſe words will not take effect with people,

until

untill God pour out his Spirit from on high, Iſa. 32. 15. to cauſe *men to approach unto God in Chriſt*; yet we muſt ſtill preſs mens duty upon them, and obteſt and charge them, *by the appearing of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and their reckoning to him in that day, that they give the Lord no reſt, until he ſend out that Spirit* (*which he will give to them who ask it*, Luk. 11. 13.) *and cauſe them to know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.*

We come now to ſpeak of the *Third* thing, (*viz.*) *What is previouſly required of theſe who are to perform this duty*: Men muſt not raſhly, inconſiderately and ignorantly ruſh in upon this matter, ſaying, *They will plead that device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, and will acquieſce and reſt on him for ſafety*: Often men do deceive themſelves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing. We ſhall therefore hold out ſome things pre-required in a perſon, who is to cloſe with *Chriſt Jeſus*, which although we offer not as poſitive qualifications, fitting a man for Chriſt that way, *Iſa.* 55. 1. yet they are ſuch things, as without them, a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Chriſt Jeſus. Beſide the common principles which are to be ſuppoſed in theſe who live under Goſpel-ordinances, as, *The knowledge that men have immortal ſouls*; *Soul and body will be united again at the laſt day*; *There is a Heaven and Hell, one of which will be the everlaſting Lot of all men*; *The Old and New*

Teſtament

Teſtament is the true Word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; Every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God, and an heir of condemnation; Reconciliation is onely by the Mediator Chriſt Jeſus; Faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new Covenant; Holineſs is the fruit of true faith, and is to be ſtudied, as that without which no man ſhall ſee God: I ſay, beſide theſe things, the knowledge of which is neceſſary, it is required of him who would believe on Chriſt Jeſus, 1. That he take to heart his natural condition, and here he muſt know ſome things, and alſo be very ſerious about them: I ſay, he muſt know ſome things; as firſt, that as he was born a Rebel and Outlaw unto God, ſo he hath by many actual tranſgreſſions diſoblig'd God, and ratified the forfeiture of his favour; yea, a man ſhould know many particular inſtances of his rebellion on all hands, as that he is a lyar, ſabbath-breaker, blaſphemer, or the like, as *Paul* ſpeaketh very particularly of himſelf afterwards, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. 2. The man muſt know, that the wrath of God denounced in Scripture, is ſtanding in force againſt theſe very ſins whereof he is guilty, and ſo conſequently, he is the party undoubtedly againſt whom God (who cannot lye) hath denounced war. A man muſt know, that when the Scripture ſaith, *Curſed is he that offereth a corrupt thing unto God, Mal.* 1. 14. it ſpeaketh againſt him for his ſuperficial ſervice performed unto God with the

the outward man, when his heart was far off. When the word ſaith, *God will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh his name in vain, Exod.* 20.7. the man muſt know it ſpeaketh againſt himſelf, who hath often careleſly profaned that dreadful name, before which all knees ſhould bow, *Phil.*2.10. and which his enemies do take in vain, *Pſal.* 139. 20. When the Word ſaith, *Curſed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently, Jer.*48.10. the man muſt know that it ſpeaketh againſt himſelf, who hath irreverently, with much wandering of heart, and drowſineſs, heard the Word preached; and without ſenſe, faith, or underſtanding, hath often prayed before him: When the Word ſaith, *Wo be unto him who giveth his neighbour drink, and puttith his bottle to him, to make him drunk alſo, that he may look on his nakedneſs, Hab.* 2.15,16. the man muſt know that it is ſpoken againſt himſelf, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadful wrath is determined by the Lord againſt him, according to that Scripture: When the Word ſaith, *God will judge unclean perſons, Heb.* 13. 4. *and will cloſe them out of the new Jeruſalem, Rev.* 21. 8. the man muſt know that the Scripture ſpeaketh theſe words againſt him, he being an unclean perſon; ſo that he is the perſon againſt whom the curſes of the Law doth directly ſtrike. 3. A man muſt know that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to ſet him free of the hazzard under which he lieth,

lyeth, becauſe *all his righteouſneſs is as an unclean thing, Iſa.* 64. 6. his prayers, his other ſervice done to God, his alms-deeds, &c. are not paſs-guilt before God, ſince they came not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end, *his Sacrifices have been an abomination unto God, Prov.* 21. 27. 4. He muſt know, that as he is void of all the ſaving graces of the Spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his Name, godly ſorrow for ſin, &c. ſo particularly, that he wants Faith in Chriſt, who taketh burthen for all them who believe on him: Untill a man know this, he will ſtill leave all his debt and burthen without care or regard, at the door of Chriſt, the common cautioner.

Now not onely muſt a man know theſe things, as I ſaid before, but muſt alſo very ſeriouſly take them to heart, that is to ſay, he muſt be affected with theſe things, and be in ſad earneſt about them, as he uſeth to be in other caſes, wherein he uſeth to be moſt ſerious; yea, he ſhould be more in earneſt here, then in other caſes, becauſe it is of greateſt concernment unto him. This ſeriouſneſs produceth, 1. A taking of Salvation to heart, more then any thing elſe. Shall men be obliged *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom? Mat.* 6. 33. Is there *but one thing neceſſary? Luk.* 10. 42. Shall *Paul count all things loſſe and dung for this matter?* Phil. 3. 8. *Is a man a looſer, gaining all the World,*

world, if he loſe his ſoul? *Mark* 8. 36. Shall this be the onely ground of joy, that *mens names are written in the book of life? Luk.* 10. 26. and ſhall not men (who would be reckoned ſerious) take their ſoul and ſalvation more to heart then any thing elſe? Surely it cannot fail. Let none deceive themſelves. If the hazzard of their ſoul, and the ſalvation thereof, and how to be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer to their heart then any thing in the world beſide. It cannot be preſumed upon juſt grounds, that they ever knew ſin, or the everlaſtingneſs of God, or his wrath aright. 2. This ſeriouſneſs breaketh the mans heart, and fainteth the ſtoutneſs of it, and leadeth it out to ſorrow, *as one doth for a firſt born: Zech.* 12. 10. I grant their ſorrow will better ſuit that Scripture afterwards, when they apprehend Chriſt pierced by their ſins. 3. It leadeth the man to a ſelf-loathing. A man taking up himſelf ſo, cannot but loath himſelf for his abomination, whereby he hath deſtroyed himſelf. There is ſomewhat of that ſpirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true repentance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. 4. This ſeriouſneſs doth make the man peremptory to find releif; ſince it is not in himſelf, he dare not put off and delay his buſineſs, as before: and this is indeed required that he finds himſelf ſo purſued and put to it, that he flees for refuge ſomewhere. I grant ſome have a higher, and ſome a leſſer degree of this ſeriouſneſs, as we ſhew in the former part of this Treatiſe. But if we

ſpeak of the Lords ordinary way of working with thoſe who are come to age, we ſay, they muſt very ſeriouſly take their ſouls eſtate to heart, deſparing of help in themſelves, Since the whole need no Phyſitian, *but thoſe who are ſick*, Mat. 9. 12. As for the meaſure, we plead onely that which probably doth ſuppoſe, that a man will be induced thereby to tranſact cordially with Chriſt, on any termes he doth offer himſelf to be cloſed with.

The ſecond thing pre-required of him who would believe on Chriſt Jeſus, is, *He muſt know and take to heart the way of eſcape from Gods wrath*; The Spirit muſt convince him of that righteouſneſs. Herein a man muſt underſtand ſomewhat diſtinctly, that God hath deviſed a way to ſave poor loſt man by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe perfect righteouſneſs hath ſatisfied offended juſtice, and procured pardon and everlaſting favour to all thoſe whom he perſwadeth by this Goſpel, to accept of Gods offer. *Acts* 13. 38, 39. *Joh.* 1. 12. So that no perſon is excluded of whatſoever rank or condition, whatſoever hath been his former way (unleſs he be guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed for ſinners, as we ſhall hear) for, all manner of ſin is forgiven unto thoſe who accept of the offer in Gods way, *Matth.* 12. 31. *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come unto God through him*, Heb. 7. 25.

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The third thing pre-required, is, *A man must know, that if God hath not excluded him, from the relief appointed; [s]he is willing to be reconciled unto men through Christ, and hath obliged man to close with him through Christ Jesus, and so to impropriate that salvation to themselves.* He not onely invites all to come, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. And welcometh all that come, as we find in the Gospel, and commendeth those who come, *Matth.* 8. 10. and 15. 28. and chideth for not coming and closing with him, *Joh.* 3. 18. But also he commandeth all to believe on Christ, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. So as a man is not to question the Lords willingness to receive men, who go to Christ honestly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in Scripture; unless that a man know so much, he will scarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of saving sinners, or adventure his own weight and stress upon Christ Jesus.

The fourth thing pre-required, is, *The man who would close with Christ Jesus, must resolve to break all Covenants with Hell and death,* Isa. 28. 15. Whatsoever known evil men are engaged into, they must resolve to forgo it; for, *there is concord betwixt Christ and Belial,* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. The Lord requireth that they who would expect him to be for them, should not be for another, *Hos.* 3. 3. This is far from Evangelick repentance, which I grant doth not precede a mans closing with Christ by faith;

there is little here beyond a mis-regard of these things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a slighting what he was mad upon, because he seeth himself destroyed thereby, and relief now offered, whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent then formerly it was. After this, when Christ is looked upon alone, his worth and beauty doth appear, so as among all the gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a sufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him. Upon which the heart loveth Gods device in the new Covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Christ, rather then any other way, bending towards him, and so the man becometh a believer. Now I will not say that all these things whereof we have spoken, are formally, orderly and distinctly found in every person before he close with God in Christ; for the way of the heart with Christ, may be added to the four wonderful things *Prov.* 18. 19. It is hard to trace the heart in its relation from darkness to light; yet we hold out the most ordinary and likely way, to him who doth ask the way, debarring thereby ignorant and senseless persons from medling, and discharging them to pretend to any interest in him whilest they remain such. The *fourth* thing we propose to speak to, is, *The properties of this duty, when rightly gone about.* I shall onely hint a few.

1. *Believing in Christ must be personal*; a man him-

himself, and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus. *The just shall live by his faith, Hab.* 2. 4. This faith, that it will not suffice for a mans safety and releif, that he is in Covenant with God, as a born member of the visible church by vertue of the parents subjection to Christs Ordinances, neither will it suffice that the person had the *initiating seal of Baptism* added, and that he then virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christs blood, as all infants do. Neither doth it suffice *that men are come beleiving parents*; their faith will not instance their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the Covenant. Neither will it suffice *that parence did in some respect engage for their children, and give them away unto God*; all these things do not avail. The children of the kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out; unless a man in his own person, put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ; but certain is is, that it must be personal.

2. This duty must be *cordial* and hearty: *with the heart, man beleiveth unto righteousness*, Rom. 10. 10. A man must be sincere and without guile in closing with Christ, judging him the onely covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way. The matter must not swim onely in the head or understanding, but it must be in the heart; the man not onely must be perswaded that Christ

is the way, but affectionately perſwaded of it, loving and liking the thing, having complacency in it; ſo that it is all a mans deſire, as *David* ſpeaketh of the Covenant, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionate, in any thing, ſurely he muſt be ſo here, in this one thing neceſſary. It muſt not be ſimply a fancy in the head, but it muſt be a heart-buſineſs, a ſoul-buſineſs; yea, not a buſineſs in the outer court of affections, but in the flower of affections, and in the inner moſt cabinet of the ſoul, where Chriſt is formed. Shall a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprize all his chief intereſts, and his everlaſting ſtate within it? Shall the Lord be ſaid to rejoyce over a man, as a Bride-groom rejoyceth over his Bride, *Iſa.* 62. and to reſt in his love with joy, *Zeph.* 3. 17. and ſhall not the heart of man go out and meet him here? the heart, or nothing; love, or nothing; Marriage love, which goeth from heart, to heart; love of eſpouſals, or nothing; *Pro.* 23. 26. 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. I will not ſay that there is in all as ſoon as they beleive, a prevailing ſenſible love, which maketh ſick; but there muſt be in beleiving a rational and kindly love, ſo well grounded, and deeply engaging, that many waters cannot quench it; It is ſtrong as death, and jealouſie in it, burneth as fire, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7.

The third property, or qualification of believing as it goeth out after Chriſt, it muſt be *rational*.

Here-

Hereby I mean, that the man ſhould move towards God in Chriſt, in knowledge and underſtanding, taking up Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, as the Scripture doth hold it out, no fancying a Chriſt to himſelf, otherways then the Goſpel ſpeaketh of him, nor another way of releif by him, then the word of God holdeth out. Therefore we find knowledg joyned to the Covenant between God and man as a requiſite, *Jer.* 24. 7. *and* 31. 34. I mean here alſo, that a man be in calmneſs of ſpirit, and as it were, in his cold blood in cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, not in a ſimple fit of affection which ſoon vaniſheth: *Mat.* 13. 20. nor in a diſtemper through ſome outward diſtreſs, as the people were, *Pſal.* 78. 34. and proved not ſtedfaſt in the Covenant; nor under a tentation of ſome outward temporary intereſt, as *Simon Magus* was when he beleived, *Acts* 8. A man muſt act here rationally, as being Maſter of himſelf, in ſome meaſure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing as it ſtands before him.

The fourth is, Faith, as it goeth out rationally, ſo it goeth out reſolutely. The poor diſtreſt people in the Goſpel did moſt reſolutely caſt themſelves upon Chriſt. This reſolutneſs of ſpirit, is in order to all difficulties that lye in the way. Violence is offered to theſe. The man whoſe heart is a ſhaping out for Chriſt Jeſus, cannot ſay, There is a Lion in the ſtreet, *Pro.* 26. 13. If he cannot

have acceſs by the door he will break through the roof of the houſe, with that man. *Luk.* 5. 19. He often doth not regard that which the World calleth diſcretion or prudence, like *Zacheus* climbing upon a tree to ſee Chriſt, when faith was breeding in his boſome, *Luk.* 19. This reſoluteneſs of ſpirit looketh towards what inconveniences may follow, and waveth all theſe, at leaſt reſolving over all theſe, like a wiſe builder who reckoneth the expence before-hand. *Luk.* 14. 28. This reſoluteneſs is alſo in order to all a mans Idols, and ſuch weights as would eaſily beſet him, if he did not bend after Chriſt over them all, like that blind man who did caſt his garment from him when Chriſt called him, *Mark* 10. 50. This reſoluteneſs in the ſoul, proceepeth from deſperate ſelf-neceſſity within the man, *Act.* 16. 30. And from the ſoveraign command of God, obliging the man to move towards Chriſt, 1 *John* 3. 23. and from the good report gone abroad of God, that he putteth none away that come unto him through Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 37. but doth commend ſuch as do adventure over the greateſt difficulties, *Mat.* 15. 18. But above all, this reſoluteneſs doth proceed from the arm of *Jehovah* ſecretly, and ſtrongly drawing the ſinner towards Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 44. I will not ſay that every one, cloſing with Chriſt in the offers of the Goſpel, hath all the foreſaid thoughts formally in his mind; yet, upon ſearch, it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in

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mind of theſe things, they are then aloſt in the ſoul.

By what is ſaid, it doth manifeſtly appear, that many in the viſible Church had need to do ſomewhat further for ſecuring of their ſouls, when they come to years of diſcretion, then is found to have been done by them before, in the Covenant between God and the Church, ſealed to them in Baptiſm. By what is ſaid alſo, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the Goſpel, held out through Chriſt Jeſus; ſo as ignorant, ſenſleſs, prophane men, cannot with any ſhadow of reaſon pretend to an intereſt in it. It is true, believing in Chriſt, and cloſing with him as a perfect Saviour, ſeemeth eaſie; and every godleſs man ſaith, that he beleiveth on him: But they deceive themſelves, ſince their ſoul hath never cordially, rationally, and reſolutely gone out after Chriſt Jeſus, as we have ſaid. It may be ſome wicked men have been enlighted, *Heb.* 6. 4. and have found ſome reel in their fear- *Acts* 24. 25. or in their joy, *Mat.* 13. 20. *Mar.* 6. 20. But not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. have either ſitten down in that common work, as their ſanctuary, until the tryal came, *Mat.* 13. 20, 21. or they return back with the Dog to their vomit, from which they had in ſome meaſure eſcaped by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, 2. *Pet.* 2. 20, 21, 22, or they utterly fall a way to the hatred

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and malicious despising and persecuting of Christ and his interests; from whence hardly can they be recovered, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. and 10. 26, 29. which thing should provoke men to be serious in this great business.

We come now to speak to the fifth thing proposed, and that is, *What be the native consequents of true believing.* I shall reduce what I will speak of them to these two; viz. *Union with God, and and Communion with him.*

First then, I say, when a sinner closeth with Christ Jesus, as is said, there is presently an admirable union, a strange oneness between God and the man. As the husband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two, but one; So Christ, or God in Christ, and the sinner closing with him by faith, are one, *Eph.* 5. 30, 31, 32. He that is so joyned unto the Lord *is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *As the Father is in the Son, and Christ in the Father; so believers are one in the Father and the Son.* They are one, as the Father and the Son are one; the Father in Christ, and Christ in believers that they may be made perfect in one. O what a strange interweaving, and indissuoible knot is there! *Joh.* 17. 21. 22, 23, 26. Because of this union between God and the beleiver, 1. They can never hate one another, henceforth the Lord will never hate the beleiver: *As no man hateth his own flesh at any time, but cherisheth it and nourisheth it, so doth Christ the*

people,

people, Eph. 5. 29. He may be angry, so as to correct and chastise the man that is a beleiver, but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage; *all the Lords paths must be mercy and truth to him*, Ps. 25. 10. *All things must work together for good to him*, Rom. 8. 28. On the other side, the beleiver can never hate God maliciously; for, *he that is born of God sinneth not*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. For the Lord hath resolved, and ordained things so, that his hand shall undoubtedly so be upon all beleivers for good, that they shall never get leave to hate him, and be so pluckt out of his hands. 2. Because of this union, there is a strange sympathy and fellow-feeling between God and the beleiver: The Lord is afflicted with the mans affliction; he doth tenderly, carefully, and seasonably resent it, as if he were afflicted with it, *Isa.* 63. 9. He who toucheth the beleiver, toucheth the apple of the Lords eye, *Zech.* 2. 8. *He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities*, Heb. 4. 15. *And precious in his sight is their blood*, Psal. 116. 15. In a word, what is done to them, is done unto him; and what is not done unto them, is not done unto him, *Mat.* 10. 40. and 25. 40. 45. On the other part, the zeal of his house sitteth in the heart of the beleiver, *Psal.* 69. 9. The Lords reproach lighteth on the believer, if it go well with his affairs, that is the business of his people. So there is a strange sympathy between God and beleivers, all by vertue of the union between them; because of which,

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men ſhould hate every thing which would compete with him in their love, or affections; and ſhould diſdain to be ſlaves to the creatures, ſince theſe are the ſervants of their Lord and Husband, and their ſervants through him. What a hateful thing is it for a Queen to whore with the ſervants of her Prince and Husband? It is alſo a ſhame for a beleiver to be afraid of evil tidings, ſince the Lord, with home he is one, alone ruleth all things, and doth whatſoever pleaſeth him in Heaven and in earth, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 23. *Pſal.* 112. 6, 7. and 115. 3.

The other great conſequent of beleiving, is an admirable, unparallel'd communion; by vertue whereof, 1. The parties themſelves do belong each to other: The Lord is the God of his people, he himſelf, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is their God, in all his glorious Attributes; his juſtice, as well as his mercy, his wiſdom, power, holineſs, &c. for, *He becometh the God of his people*, as he often ſpeaketh in the Covenant. On the other part, the beleivers are his people; in their very perſons they are his, as the Covenant doth ſpeak, *They ſhall be his people*; their head, their heart, their hand, &c. whatſoever they are, they are his. 2. By vertue of this communion, they have a mutual intereſt in one anothers whole goods and geer, in as far as can be uſeful. All the Lords Word doth belong to the Beleiver; Threatnings as well

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as Promises, for their good; all his wayes, all his works of all sorts, special communications, death, devils, even all things, in so far as can be useful, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22, 23. On the other side, all which belongeth to the Beleiver, is the Lords; heritage, children, life, wife, credit, all is at his disposing; if any of these can be useful to him, the Beleiver is to forgo them, else he falsifieth that communion, and declareth himself in so far, unworthy of Christ, *Luke* 14. 26. 3. By vertue of this communion, there should be much homelines and familiarity between God and the Beleiver. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the beleiver, and do to him what seemeth good to him, and the man is not to mistake, or say unto God, What dost thou? (but in so far as concerneth his duty) yea, he is still to say in every case, Good is the Word and Will of the Lord, *Isa.* 38. 8. 2 *Kings* 4. 23. 26. On the other part, the beleiver may in an humble way, be homely and familiar with God in Christ; he may *come with bolnes to the throne of Grace*, and not use a number of complements in his addresses unto God, *Heb.* 4. 16. *For he is no more a stranger unto God*, Eph. 2. 19. so that he needs not speak unto God, as one that hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many professors do, and it maketh a huge inconsistency in their Religion. The beleiver also may lay open all his heart unto God, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. and impart

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all his ſecrets unto him, and all his cenſures without fear of a miſtake. The believer alſo may enquire into what God doth, in ſo far as may concern his own duty, or in ſo far as may ward off miſtakes of the Lords way, and reconcile it with his Word, *Joh.* 13. 15. The believer is a friend in this reſpect, as knowing what the Maſter doth, ſee *Gen.* 18. 23, &c. *Jer.* 32. 1. *Iſa.* 63. 17. The believer alſo may be homely with God, to go in daily with his failings, and ſeek repentance, pardon and peace through Chriſts Advocateſhip, *Acts* 5. 31. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. O how often in one day may the believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or to turn grace into wantonneſs! The Lord hath commanded men to forgive ſeventy times ſeaven in one day, and hath hinted therein a parable, how much more the Maſter will forgive, *Mat.* 18. 22. 28. The believer alſo may be homely to entruſt God with all his outward concernments, for he doth care for theſe things, *Mat.* 6. 30, 32. 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. Yea, the believer may humbly put God to it, to make him forth coming for him, in all caſes, as beſeemeth, and to help him to ſuitable fruit in every ſeaſon, even grace in time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16. Yea, how great things may believers ſeek from him in Chriſt Jeſus, both for themſelves and others, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14, 15. *John.* 14. 13. *Iſa.* 45. 11. It is the ſhame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that

communion

communion with God more then they do: Christ may justly upbraid them, that they ask nothing in his Name, *Joh.* 16. 24.

By what is said, it doth appear of how great consequence this duty of beleiving is, by which a man closeth with Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath sealed, and given for a Covenant to the people. It is so honourable for God answering his very design, and serving his interest in the whole contrivement and manifestation of the Gospel: And it is so advantagious to men, that Satan and an evil heart of unbelief, do mightily oppose it, by moving objections against it. I shall hint some most ordinary.

Object. *I am so base, worthless and faithless of my self, that I think it were high presumption for me to meddle with Christ Jesus, or the salvation purchased at the rate of his blood.*

Answ. It is true, all the Children of *Adam* are base and naughty before him, *who chargeth his Angels with folly*, Job 4. 18. All Nations are less than nothing and vanity before him, *Isa.* 40. 17. There is such a disproportion between God and men, that unless he himself had devised that Covenant, and of his own free will had offered so to transact with men, it had been high treason for men or Angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed God-

head; and that he ſhould have ſubjected himſelf to the ſhameful death of the Croſs; and all this, that men, who were rebels, ſhould be reconciled unto God, and be made eternal happy, by being in his holy company for ever. But I ſay, all this was his own device and free choyce: Yea, moreover, if God had not ſoveraignly commanded men ſo to cloſe with him in and through Chriſt, *Iſa.* 55.1,2,3. *Mat.* 11.28. 1 *Joh.* 3.23. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. no man durſt have made uſe of that device of his. So then, although with *Abigale* I may ſay, let me be but a ſervant to waſh the feet of the ſervants of my Lord, 1 *Sam.* 25.41. Yet ſince he hath in his holy wiſdome deviſed that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, *Epheſ.* 1.18. *John* 17.10. and hath commanded me, as I ſhall be anſwerable, in the great day, to cloſe with him in Chriſt, as is ſaid; I dare not diſobey, nor enquire into the reaſons of his contrivements and commands, but muſt adventure on the buſineſs, as I would not be found to fruſtrate the grace of God, and in a manner diſappoint the Goſpel, *Gal.* 2.21. and falſifie the record which God hath born of his Son, that there is Life enough in him for men, 1 *Joh.* 5.10,11. and ſo make God a liar, and add that rebellion to all my former tranſgreſſions.

Object. *I am a perſon ſingularly ſinful, beyond any I know; Therefore I dare not preſume to go near unto Chriſt Jeſus, or look after that ſalvation which is through his righteouſneſs.* Anſw.

Answ. Is your sin beyond the drunkenness and incest of *Lot*? adultery, covered with Murder, in *David*? Idolatry, and horrid Apostacy in *Solomon*? Idolatry, Murder, and Witchcraft in *Manasseh*? anger against God, and his way in *Jonah*? forswearing of Christ in *Peter*, after he was forewarned, and had vowed the contrary; bloody persecution in *Paul*, making the Saints to blaspheme? &c. (now wo to him who is imboldned to sin by these instances recorded in Scripture, and adduced here to the commendation of the free and rich grace of God, and to encourage poor penitent sinners to fly unto Christ) I say, are your sins beyond these? Yet all these obtained pardon through Christ, as the Scripture doth shew. Know therefore, that all sins do lye alike level before the free grace of God, who loveth freely, *Hos.* 14. 4. and looketh not to less or more sin: If the person have a heart to come unto him through Christ, then he is able to save to the utmost, *Heb.* 7. 25. Yea, it is more provoking before God, not to close with Christ, when the offer cometh to a man, then all the rest of his transgressions are: for, *He that believeth not, hath made God a lyar, in that record he hath born of life in the Son: and he who doth not believe, shall be condemned for not believing on the Son of God*, that shall be the main thing in his dittey, *John* 3. 18. So that much sin cannot excuse a man, if he scare at Christ, and shift his offer, since God hath openly

declared, that this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, *Christ came to save sinners whereof I am chief:* even he who is chief of sinners in his own apprehension, is bound to believe and accept this saying, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

Object. *My sins have some aggravating circumstances beyond the same sins in other persons, which doth much terrifie me.*

Answ. What can the aggravations of thy sins be, which are not parallel'd in the fore-cited examples? Is thy sin against Great Light? So Beloved, many of these we spake of before. Was it against singular mercies and deliverances? So was that of *Lot* and *Noah's* drunkenneſſe. Was thy sin done with much deliberation? So was *Davids* whilst he wrote the letter against *Uriah.* Was it against, or after any singular manifestation of God? So was *Solomons.* Was it by a small and despicable tentation? So was that of *Jonah,* and of *Peter,* if we consider the heinousnes of their transgression. Hast thou reiterated the sin, and committed it over again? So did *Lot,* so did *Peter,* so did *Jehoshaphat* in joyning with *Ahab* and *Jehoram,* 1 *Kings* 22. 2 *Kings* 3. Are there many gross sins concurring together in thee? So were there in *Manasseh.* Hast thou stood long out in Rebellion (that, as all the former, is thy shame: but) so did the thief on the Cross, he stood it out to the last gasp, *Luk.* 23. 42. *If yet thou hast an ear to hear, thou art commanded to hear, Mat.* 13. 19. Although thou hast long

long ſpent thy money for that which is not bread, *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2. Thou haſt the greater need now to haſt, and to flee for refuge; and if thou do ſo, he ſhall welcome thee, and in no wayes caſt thee out, *Joh.* 6. 37. eſpecially, ſince he hath uſed no preſcription of time in Scripture. So that all thoſe aggravations of thy ſin will not excuſe thy ſhifting off the Lords offer.

Object. In all theſe inſtances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty; Nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of ſuch things as are in me.

Anſw. It is hard to condeſcend upon every particular tranſgreſſion which may vex the conſcience; yea, leſſer ſins then ſome of thoſe I have mentioned, may hugely diſquiet, if the Lord blow the fire. But, for thy ſatisfaction, I ſhall condeſcend upon ſome truths of Scripture, which do reach ſins and caſes more univerſally, then any man can do particularly. See *Exod.* 34. 7. God pardoneth iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin: that is, all manner of ſin, *Ezek.* 18. 21, 22. 30. If a man turn from all his wickedneſs, it ſhall no more be remembred, or prove his ruine, *Joh.* 6. 37. Him that cometh, he will in no wayes caſt out; that is, whatſoever be his ſins, or the aggravations of them, *Joh.* 3. 16. *Whoſoever believeth ſhall be ſaved*; that is, without exception of any ſin, or any caſe. *Heb.* 7. 25. *He is able to ſave to the utmoſt theſe who come to God through him*: no man

can ſufficiently declare what is Gods *uttermoſt*, Mat. 12. 31. *All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men*, that is, there is no ſort of ſin, whereof one inſtance ſhall not be forgiven in one perſon or other, except the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Theſe, and the like Scriptures, do carry all ſorts of ſin before them; ſo that, let thy ſins be what they will, or can be, they may be ſunk in one of theſe two truths, ſo as thy ſin can be no excuſe to thee for ſhifting the offer of peace and ſalvation through Chriſt, ſince any than who *will*, is allowed to come and take, *Rev.* 22. 17. We will not multiply words. The great God of Heaven and Earth, hath ſovereignly commanded all who ſee their need of relief, to betake themſelves unto Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe cordially with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by him, laying aſide all objections and excuſes, as they ſhall be anſwerable unto him in the day he ſhall judge the quick and the dead, and ſhall drive away out of his preſence all theſe who would dare to ſay, their ſins and condition were ſuch, as that they durſt not adventure upon Chriſts perfect Righteouſneſs for their relief, notwithſtanding of the Lords own command often interpoſed, and in a manner, his credit engaged.

Object. *I ſuſpect I am guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and ſo am incapable of pardon, and therefore I need not think of believing on Chriſt Jeſus for ſaving of my Soul.*

Anſw.

Anſw. Although none ſhould charge this ſin on themſelves, or on others, unleſſe they can prove and inſtruct the charge according to Chriſts example, *Mat.* 12. 25, 26, 32. yet for ſatisfying of the doubt, I ſhall, 1. Shew what is not the ſin against the Holy Ghoſt, properly ſo called, becauſe there be ſome groſs ſins which people do unwarrantably judge to be this unpardonable ſin. 2. I ſhall ſhew what is the ſin against the Holy Ghoſt, 3. I ſhall draw ſome concluſions in anſwer directly to the objection.

As for the Firſt, There be many groſſe ſins, which although (as all other ſins) may be ſins against the Holy Ghoſt, who is Gods equal and one with the Father and the Son, and are done against ſome of his operations and motions, yet are they not *the Sin against the Holy Ghoſt*, which is the unpardonable ſin. As, firſt, blaſpheming of God, under bodily tortures, is not that ſin, for ſome Saints fell into this, *Acts* 26. 11. much leſs, blaſpheming of God in a fit of diſtraction, or frenzy, for a man is not a free rational agent at that time; and he that ſpareth his people as a Father doth the Son that ſerveth him, and doth pity, ſo *Mal.* 3. 17. *Pſal.* 103. 13. doth he ſpare and pity in theſe tovings; for ſo would our Fathers according to the fleſh do, if we blaſphemed them in a fit of diſtraction; much leſſe are horrid blaſphemies against God, darted in upon the ſoul, and not allowed there, this un-

pardonable ſin; for ſuch things were offered to Chriſt, *Mat.* 4. and are often caſt in upon the Saints. 2. The hating of good in others, whileſt I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil; yea, the ſpeaking againſt it, yea, the perſecuting of it in that caſe, is not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; for all theſe will be found in *Paul* before he was converted, and *he obtained Mercy, becauſe he did theſe things ignorantly.* 3. Heart-riſing at the thriving of others in the work and way of God, whileſt I love in it my ſelf; yea, the riſing of heart againſt providence, which often expreſſeth it ſelf againſt the creatures neareſt our hand, yea, this riſing of heart entertained, and maintained (although they be horrid things, leading towards that unpardonable ſin, yet) are not that ſin; for theſe may be in the Saints, proceeding from ſelf-love, which cannot endure to be darkned by another, and proceeding from ſome croſs in their Idol under a fit of temtation; the moſt part of all this was in *Jonah*, Jonah 4. 4. Not onely are not decays in what was once in the man, and falling into groſs ſins againſt Light, after the receiving of the truth, this unpardonable ſin (for then many of all the Saints in Scripture were undone;) but further, Apoſtacy from much of the truth is not that ſin; for that was in *Solomon*, and in the Church of *Corinth* and *Galatia*; yea, denying, yea, forſwearing of the moſt fundamental truth

truth under a great tentation, is not this sin; for then *Peter* had been undone. 5. As resisting, quenching, grieving and vexing of the Spirit of God by many sinfull wayes, are not this unpardonable sin, for they are charged with these who are called to repentance in Scripture, and not shut out, as guilty of this sin: So neither reiterating sin against light, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, although it leadeth towards it; for such was *Peters* sin in denying Christ; so was *Jehosaphats* sin in joyning with *Ahab* and *Jehoram*. 6. Purposes and essays of self-murther, and even purposes of murthering godly men, (the party being under a sad fit of tentation) yea, actual self-murther, (although probably it often joyneth in the issue with this unpardonable sin, which ought to make every soul look upon the very tentation to it with horrour and abhorrency, yet) is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; The Jaylor intended to kill himself upon a worse account then many poor people do in the sight and sense of Gods wrath, and of their owne Sin and Corruption; yet that Jaylor obtained pardon, *Acts* 16. 27, 34. And *Paul* before his effectual calling, was accessory unto the murther of many Saints, and intended to kill more, as himself granteth, *Act.* 26. 9, to 13. Although all these are dreadful sins, each of them deserving wrath everlasting, and not being repented of, bringeth endless vengeance, especially the last cuts off hope of relief, for ought can be ex-

pecting in an ordinary way, yet none of these is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost; and so under any of these, *There is hope to him that hath an ear to hear the joyful sound of the Covenant*; All manner of such sin and blasphemy may be forgiven, as is clear in the Scripture, where these things are mentioned.

As for the second thing. Let us see what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. It is not a simple act of transgression, but a complex; of many mischievous things, involving Soul and Body ordinarily in guilt. We thus describe it; *It is a rejecting and opposing of the Chief Gospel Truth, and way of salvation, made out singularly to a man by the Spirit of God in the truth and good thereof, and that avowedly, freely, wilfully, maliciously and despightfully, breeding hopeless fear.* There be three places of Scripture, which do speak most of this sin, and thence we will prove every part of this description, in so far as may be useful to our present purpose, by which it will appear that none who have a mind for Christ, need stumble at what is spoken of this sin in Scripture, See *Mat.* 12. 24, --32. *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *and* 10. 25,--29. First then, let us consider the Object about which this sin, or sinful acting of the man guilty thereof, is conversant, and that is the chief Gospel-truth, and way of Salvation: both which run to one thing. This is the way which God hath contrived for saving of sinners by Jesus Christ the promised *Mes-*

siah

Lord and Saviour, by whoſe death and righteouſneſs men are to be ſaved, as he hath held forth in the Ordinances; confirming the ſame by many mighty works in Scripture tending there-to. This way of ſalvation is the Object. The *Phariſees* oppoſe this, that Chriſt was the Meſſiah, *Mat.* 12. 23, 24. The wrong is done againſt the Son of God, *Heb.* 6. 6. and the blood of the Covenant, and the Spirit graciouſly offering to apply theſe things, *Heb.* 10. 29. Secondly, In the deſcription, conſider the qualifications of this object. It is ſingularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the truth and good thereof. This faith, 1. That there muſt be knowledge of the truth and way of Salvation. The Phariſees knew that Chriſt was the heir, *Mat.* 21. 38. The party hath knowledge, *Heb.* 10. 26. 2. That knowledge of the thing, muſt not ſwim onely in the head, but there muſt be ſome half heart perſwaſion of it. Chriſt knew the Phariſees thoughts, and ſo did judge them, *Mat.* 12. 25. and that the contrary of what they ſpake was made out upon their heart. There is a taſting, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. which is beyond ſimple enlightning; yea, there is ſuch a perſwaſion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward ſanctification, *Heb.* 10. 29. 3. This perſwaſion muſt not onely be of the verity of the thing, but of the good of it. The party taſteth the good Word of God, and he apprehendeth the thing as eligible, *Heb.* 6. 5. 4. This perſwaſion is not made

out

out onely by ſtrength of Argument, but alſo by an enlightning work of Gods Spirit, ſhining on the truth, and making it conſpicuous. Therefore is that ſin called *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, Mat. 12. *Mark* 3. The perſons are ſaid to have received the Holy Ghoſt, *Heb.* 6. 4. and to do deſpight unto the ſpirit of grace, who was in the neareſt ſtep of a gracious operation with them, *Heb.* 10. 29. Thirdly, In this deſcription, conſider the acting of the party againſt the object ſo qualified. It is a rejecting and oppoſing of it: which importeth, 1. That men have once, ſome way at leaſt been in hands with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the Phariſees. 2. That they do reject, even with contempt, what they had of it, or in their offer. The Phariſees deny it, and ſpeak diſdainfully of Chriſt, *Mat.* 12.24. They fall away, intending to ſhame Chriſt, *Heb.* 6. 5, 6. 3. The men ſet themſelves againſt it by the ſpirit of perſecution, as the Phariſees did ſtill. They rail againſt it: Therefore it is called *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, *Mat.* 12. 24, 31. They would Crucifie Chriſt again, if they could, *Heb.* 6. 6. They are Adverſaries, *Heb.* 10. 27. Fourthly, conſider the properties of this acting. 1. It is *avowed*, that is, not ſeeking to ſhelter or hide it ſelf. The Phariſees ſpeak againſt Chriſt publiquely, *Mat.* 12.24. They would have Chriſt brought to an *open ſhame*, *Heb.* 6. 6. They forſake the Ordinances which ſavour that way, *and* 10. 25. and deſpiſe the danger:

for

or, looking for indignation, they trample that blood still, *Heb.* 10. 27, 29. 2. The party acteth *freely*, it is not from unadvisedness, nor from force or constraint, but an acting of free choice; nothing doth force the Pharisees to speak against and persecute Christ. They Crucifie to *themselves*, they react the murder of their own free accord, and in their own bosome, none constraining them, *Heb.* 6. 6. They sin of free choice, as the word is, *spontaneously*, *Heb.* 10. 27. 3. It is acted *wilfully*. They are so resolute, they will not be dissuaded by any offer, or the most precious means, as is clear in the foresaid Scriptures. 4. It is done *maliciously*, so as it proceeds not so much, if at all, from a tentation to pleasure, profit, or honour. It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end proposed; but out of heart-malice, against God and Christ, and the advancement of his Glory and Kingdom. So that it is the very nature of Satans sin, who hath an irreconciliable hatred against God, and the remedy of sin, because his glory is thereby advanced. This is a special ingredient in this sin. The Pharisees are found guilty of heart-malice against Christ, since they spake so against him, and not against their own children casting out Devils; and this is the force of Christs Argument, *Mat.* 12. 27. They do their utmost to Crucifie Christ again, and to bring him to an open shame, *Heb.* 6. 6. They are adversaries like the

Devil,

Devil, *Heb.* 10. 27. 5. It is done *despightfully*. The malice must bewray it self. The Pharisee must proclaim that Christ hath correspondence with Devils, *Mat.* 12. He must be put to an open shame, and crucified again, *Heb.* 6. they must tread under foot that blood, and do despite to the Spirit; *Heb.* 10. 29. so that the party had rather perish a thousand times, then be in Christs debt for salvation. The last thing in the description, is, the ordinary attendant or consequence of this sin, it breedeth *Desperate and Hopeless fear*: They fear him, whom they hate, with a slavish, hopeless fear, such as Devils have, *Heb.* 10. 27. They know that God will put out his power against them; they tremble in the remembrance of it; and if they could be above him, and destroy him, they covet it; and since they cannot reach that, they hate with the utmost of heart-malice, and do persecute him, and all that is his with despite.

As for the third thing propoled, (*viz.*) The *Conclusions* to be drawn from what is said, whereby we will speak directly to the Objection: 1. As I hinted before, since the sin against the Holy Ghost is so remarkable, and may be well known where it is, none should charge themselves with it, unless they can prove and instruct the charge; for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labour to perswade my soul that he will never pardon

don me; it is the very way to make me desperate, and to lead me unto the unpardonable sin; therefore unless thou canst and darest say, that thou dost hate the way which God hath devised for saving of sinners, and dost resolve to oppose the thriving of his Kingdom, both with thy self and others, out of malice and despite against God, thou ought not to suspect thy self guilty of this sin. 2. Whatsoever thou hast done against God, if thou dost rue it, and wish it were undone, thou canst not be guilty of this sin; for in it, heart-malice and despight against God doth still prevail. 3. If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon, and would be infinitely obliged unto him for it, then thou canst not in that case be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; for, as we shewed before, they who are guilty of it, do so despite God, that they would not be his debtors for salvation. 4. Whatsoever thou hast done, if thou hast a desire after Jesus Christ, and dost look with a sore heart after him, and canst not think of parting with his Blessed Company for ever; or if thou must shed with him, yet dost wish well to him, and all his, thou needest not suspect thy self to be guilty of this unpardonable sin; for there can be no such hatred of him in thy bosome, as is necessarily required to make up that sin. And if thou wouldst be above the reach of that sin, and secure against it for ever, then go work upon thy heart to plead salvation

by

by Christ Jesus, and to close with God in him, acquiescing in him as the sufficient ransome and rest, as we have been pressing before, and yield to him to be saved in his way: Do this in good earnest, and thou shalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing wherewith Satan doth affright so many poor seekers of God.

Object. *Although I be not excluded from the benefit of the New Covenant, yet it is not in my power to believe on Christ; for Faith is the gift of God, and above the strength of flesh and blood.*

Answ. It is true, that saving Faith, by which alone, a man can heartily close with God in Christ, is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we said before in the premises: Yet remember, 1. The Lord hath left it as a Duty upon all who hear this Gospel, cordially by faith to close with his offer of salvation through Christ, as is clear in the Scripture; and you must know, that although it be not in our power to perform that duty of our selves, yet the Lord may justly condemn for not performing of it, and we are inexcusable, because at first he made men perfectly able to do whatsoever he should command. 2. The Lord commanding this thing, which is above our power, willeth us to be sensible of our inability to do the thing, and would have us putting it on him to work it in us: He hath promised to give the new heart, and he hath not excluded any from the benefit of that promise. 3. The

Lord

Lord useth by these Commands and Invitations, and mens meditation on the same, and their supplication about the thing, to convey power unto the soul to perform the duty: Therefore, for answer to the objection, I do obtest thee in the Lords Name, to lay to heart these his Commandments and Promises, and meditate on them, and upon that blessed business of the New Covenant, and pray unto God as you can, over them, (for he will be enquired to do these things, *Ezek.* 36. 37.) and lay thy cold heart to that device of God expresst in the Scriptures, and unto Christ Jesus, who is given for a Covenant to the People, and look to him for life and quickening; go and essay to plead that salvation in the way God doth offer it, and to close with, and rest on Christ for it, as if all were in thy power, yet looking to him for the thing, as knowing that it must come from him; and if thou do so, he who meets these who remember him in his wayes, *Isa.* 65. 5. will not be wanting on his part, and thou shalt not have ground to say, that thou moved towards the thing until thou could do no more for want of strength, and so left it at Gods door: It shall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the business: yea, I may say, if by all thou hast ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and desireth to be in hands with it, thou hast it already performed within thee, so that difficulty is past, before thou was aware of it.

Object.

Object. *Many who have closed with Christ Jesus, as is said, are still complaining of their leanness and fruitlesnesse, which maketh my heart lay the lesse weight on that duty of believing.*

Answ. If you be convinced that it is a duty to believe on Christ, as is said, you may not shift it under any pretence. As for these complaints of some who have looked after him, not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit. I say, 1. Many by their jealousies of Gods love, and by their mis-belief, (after they have so closed with God) do obstruct many precious communications, which otherwise would be let out to them, *Mat.* 13.58. 2. It cannot be, that any whose heart is gone out after Christ, have found him a wilderness, *Jer.* 2. 31, surely they find somewhat in their spirit swaying them towards God in these two great things, (*viz.*) how to be found in him in that day, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. and how to be forth-coming to his praise in the Land of the Living, *Psal.* 119. 17. and 56. 13. they find these two things aloft in the soul, and that is much; moreover, they shall after search, if they judge aright, find ever since an emptiness in the Creatures, which abundance of the Creature cannot fill up, all is vanity; onely God can fill the empty room in their heart, and when he but breatheth a little, there is no room for additional comfort from creatures; this saith, that God hath captivated the man, and hath fixed that saving principle in the understanding

ing and heart, who is God but the Lord? *Worship him all ye gods*, Psal. 97.7. Yea, further, these whose heart hath closed with God in Christ, as is said, will not deny that there have been seasonable preventings and quickenings now and then, when the soul was like to fail, *Psal.* 21. 3. *and* 94. 18. 19. therefore, let none say, that there is no friut following, and let none shift their duty upon the unjust and groundless complaints of others,

Object. *Although I judge it my duty to close with Gods device in the Covenant, I am in the dark how to manage that duty, for sometimes God doth offer to be our God without any mention of Christ, and sometimes saith, that he will betroth us unto him; and in other places of Scripture, we are called to come to Christ, and he is the Bridegroom. Again, God sometimes speaketh of himself as a Father to men, sometimes as a Husband; Christ is sometimes called the Husband, and sometimes a Brother, which relations seem inconsistent, and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God when my heart would agree with him, and close with him.*

Answ. It may be very well said, that men do come to God, or close with him, and yet they come to Christ and close with him. They may be said to come under a marriage relation unto God, and unto Christ also, who is Husband, Father, Brother, &c. to them, and there is no such mystery here as some do conceive. For the better un-

derſtanding of it, conſider theſe few things. 1. Although God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in ſome capacity of tranſacting with him immediately, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *Gen.* 2. 16, 17. yet man, by his fall, did put himſelf at a perfect diſtance from God, and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with him immediately. 2. The Lord did, after *Adams* fall, make manifeſt the new covenant, in which he did ſignifie that he was content to tranſact with man again, in and through a Mediator; and ſo did appoint men to come to him through Chriſt, *Heb.* 7. 25. and to look for acceptation onely in him, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. ordaining men to hear Chriſt, He being the onely party, in whom God was well pleaſed, *Mat.* 17. 5. 3. This matter is ſo clear, and ſuppoſed to be ſo notorious in Scripture, and ſo manifeſt to all who are under the Ordinances, that the Lord doth often ſpeak of tranſacting with himſelf, not making mention of the mediator, becauſe it is ſuppoſed, that every one in the Church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and through Chriſt Jeſus the Mediator. 4. Conſider that Chriſt Jeſus, God-man, is not onely a fit truſting place for God and men to meet into, and a fit ſpokeſman to treat between the parties now at variance, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. But we may ſay alſo, he is the immediate Bridegroom, and ſo our cloſing or tranſacting with God, may be juſtly called the Marri-

age

age of the Kings Son; and the elect may be called the *Lambs Wife*, Chriſt Jeſus being, as it were the hand which God holdeth out unto men, and on which they lay hold when they deal with God. And ſo through and by Chriſt, we cloſe with God, as our God, on whom our ſoul doth terminate laſtly and ultimately through Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. 5. Conſider that the diverſe relations mentioned in Scripture, are ſet down, to ſignifie the ſure and indiſſoluble union and communion between God and his people: whatſoever nearneſs is between head and members, root and branches, King and Subjects, ſhepheard and flock, father and children, brother and ſiſter, Husband and Wife, &c. all is here, *Joh.* 17. 21. to 27. So that whatſoever be ſpoken in Scripture, people may be clear, that God calleth them to be reconciled unto him through Chriſt, and doth offer himſelf to be their God and Husband in him alone; and men are to accept God to be their God in Chriſt, pleaſing that way of releif for poor man, and to give up themſelves unto God in Chriſt, in whom alone they can be accepted. And they who cloſe with Chriſt, they do cloſe with God in him, who is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Joh.* 14. 9, to 12. And we are not to dip further into the diverſe relations mentioned in Scripture, between God or Chriſt, and men, then as they may point out union and communion, or nearneſs with God

hrough Chriſt Jeſus, and our advantage thereby.

Theſe things being clear, we will not multiply words. But ſince to beleive on Chriſt is the great duty, required of all that hear this Goſpel, we obteſt every one, in the Lords name, to whom the report of this ſhall come, that without delay they take to heart their loſt condition in themſelves, and that they lay to heart the releif which God hath provided by Jeſus Chriſt, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the ſame, and to be ſaved that way. And that they lay to heart, that there is no other way of eſcape from the wrath that is to come (becauſe of which men would be glad at the laſt day, to run into a lake of melted Lead to be hid from the face of the Lamb, whom they do here deſpiſe) We ſay, we obteſt all in the conſideration of theſe things, to work up their hearts to this buſineſs, and to lay themſelves open for God, and to receive him through Chriſt in the offers of the Goſpel, acquieſcing in him, as the onely deſireable and ſatisfying good, that ſo they may ſecure themſelves, go ſpeedily and ſearch for his offers of peace and ſalvation in the Scripture, and work up your heart and ſoul to cloſe with them, and with Chriſt in them, and with God in Chriſt: and do it ſo, as you may have this to ſay, that you were ſerious, and in earneſt, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing to your apprehenſion and

and for ought you know, Chriſt is the choice of your heart, at leaſt you neither know nor allow any thing to the contrary: whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to ſearch and try if there be ought a miſs, to rectifie it, and lead unto the right way. Now this cleaving of the heart unto him, and caſting it ſelf upon him, to be ſaved in his way, is beleiving, which doth indeed ſecure a man from the wrath that is to come, becauſe now he hath received Chriſt, and beleiveth on him, and ſo ſhall not enter into condemnation, as ſaith the Scripture.

Object. *When I hear what it is to beleive on Chriſt Jeſus, I think ſometimes I have faith: for I dare ſay, to my apprehenſion, I pleaſe the invention of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, my heart goeth out after him, and doth determinate upon him as a ſatisfying treaſure; and I am glad to accept God to be my God in him. But I often do queſtion if ever I have done ſo, and ſo am for moſt part kept heſitating and doubting if I do beleive, or be ſavingly in Covenant with God.*

Anſw. It is ordinary for many whoſe hearts are gone out after Chriſt in the Goſpel, and have received him, to bring the ſame in queſtion again. Therefore I ſhall adviſe one thing as a notable help to fix the ſoul, in the maintaining faith and an intereſt in God; and that is, that men not onely cloſe heartily with God in

Expreſs tranſacting with God.

Chriſt, as is ſaid, But alſo, they *expreſly, explicitely, by word of mouth and vive voice; and formally cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, and accept Gods offer of ſalvation through him, and ſo make a Covenant with God.* And this, by Gods bleſſing may contribute not a little for eſtabliſhing them about their laving intereſt in God.

Before I ſpeak directly to this expreſs Covenanting with God, I premiſe theſe few things. 1. I do not here intend a covenanting with God, eſſentially differing from the Covenant between God and the viſible Church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed Will. Neither do I intend a Covenant, differing eſſentially from that tranſacting of the heart with God in Chriſt, formerly ſpoken unto: It is that ſame Covenant, onely it differeth by a ſingular circumſtance, *viz.* the *formal expreſſion* of the thing which the heart did before practiſe. 2. I grant this expreſs covenanting and tranſacting with God, is not abſolutely neceſſary for a mans ſalvation: For, if any perſon cloſe heartily and ſincerely with God, offering himſelf in Chriſt in the Goſpel, his ſoul and ſtate is thereby ſecured, according to the Scripture, although he uttet not words with his mouth: But this expreſs verbal covenanting with God, is very expedient, for the better being of a mans ſtate, and his more comfortable maintaining of an intereſt in Chriſt Jeſus. 3. This expreſs covenanting with God by word of mouth, is of no worth,

worth, without ſincere heart cloſing with God in Chriſt joyned with it: for, without that, it is but a prophaning of the Lords Name, and a mocking of him to his face, ſo to draw near unto him with the lips, whilſt the heart is far away from him. 5. I grant, both cordial and verbal tranſacting with God will not make out a mans gracious eſtate unto him, ſo as to put and keep it above controverſie, without joynt witneſs of the Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God; yet this explicite way of tranſacting with God, joyned with that heart-cloſing with him in Chriſt, contributes much for clearing up unto a man, that there is a fixed bargain between God and him, and will do much to ward off him many groundleſs jealouſies and objections of an unſtable minde and heart, which uſeth affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act and perform the former hour. This explicite covenanting, is an inſtrument taken of what paſt between God and the ſoul, and ſo hath its own vantage for ſtrengthning of Faith.

As for this expreſs covenant, we ſhall 1. ſhew that is a very warrantable practices 2. We ſhall ſhew ſhortly what is preparatorily required of thoſe who do ſo tranſact with God. 3. How men ſhall go about that duty. 4. What ſhould follow thereupon.

As to the *firſt*, I ſay, it is a warrantable practice and an incumbent duty, expreſly and by

word to covenant with God, which appeareth thus;

1. In many places of Scripture (if we look to what they may bear according to their ſcope and the analogy of faith) God hath commanded it, and left in on people as a duty, *Iſa.* 44. 5. *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lords*, Iſa. 45. 24. *Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, *Jer.* 31. 4. *Wilt thou cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth*, Zech. 13. 9. *They ſhall ſay, The Lord is my God*, Hoſ. 2. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me Iſhi*, and in many places elſewhere. Now ſince God hath ſo clearly left it on men in the matter of the word, they may be perſwaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well-pleaſing unto him.

2. *Arg.* It is the approved practiſe of the Saints in Scripture, thus expreſly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty, afterwards. *David* did often expreſly ſay unto God, that he was his God, his portion and that himſelf was his ſervant. *Thomas* will put his intereſt out of queſtion with it, *Joh.* 20 28. Yea, I ſay, the Saints are much quieted in remembrance of what hath paſt that way between God and them, *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Pſal.* 142. 5. we find it often in the book of the *Canticles*. Now ſhall the cheif worthies of God be ſo much in a duty, breeding ſo much quiet and ſatisfaction to them in many caſes, and ſhall we be under the New Teſtament,

ment, unto whom acceſs is miniſtred abundantly, and who partake of the ſap of the Olive; ſhall we (I ſay) lie behind in this approved piece of homelineſs with God? Since we ſtudy to imitate that cloud of witneſſes in other things (as faith, zeal, patience, &c.) let us all imitate them in this.

3. *Arg.* The thing about which we move here is a matter of the greateſt concernment in all the world: It is the life of our ſoul, *Deut.* 32. 47. Oh ſhall men ſtudy to be expreſs, explicite, plain and peremptory in all their other great buſineſſes becauſe they are ſuch, and ſhall they not much more be peremptory and expreſs in this, which doth moſt concern them? I wonder that many not onely do not ſpeak it with their mouth, but that they do not ſwear, and ſubſcribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for ſecuring of God to themſelves in Chriſt, and themſelves unto God, which the Scripture doth warrant, *Iſa.* 44. 5.

This alſo may have its own weight, as an argument to preſs this way of covenanting with God. The buſineſs of intereſt in Chriſt, and of real and honeſt tranſacting with him, is a thing, which in experience of Saints, is moſt frequently brought upon debate and in queſtion. Therefore men had need, all the ways they can, even by thought, word, and deed, to put it to a point.

This alſo may have place here for preſſing this

as a duty, that God is ſo formal, expreſs, diſtinct and legal, (to ſay ſo) in all the buſineſs, of mans ſalvation, *viz.* Chriſt muſt be a near kinſman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; he muſt be choſen, called, authorized and ſent, Covenants formally drawn between the Father and him, the Father, accepting payment and ſatisfaction, giving formal diſcharges, all done clearly and expreſly. Shall the Lord be ſo expreſs, plain and peremptory in every part of the buſineſs, and ſhall our part of it reſt in a confuſed *thought*, and we be as dumb beaſts before him? If it were a marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, although there were conſent in heart given by the woman, and known to the man, if ſhe did never expreſs ſo much by word, being in a capacity to do ſo. Now this Covenant between God and man, is held out in Scripture as a marriage between man and wife, *Hoſ.* 19. 20. 2 *Cor.* 2. The whole Song of *Solomon* ſpeaketh it. The Lord uſeth ſimilitudes, to ſignifie unto us what he intends; and ſurely this is a ſpecial requiſite in Marriage, that the wife give an expreſs and explicite conſent unto the buſineſs: the man ſaith ſo, I take thee to be my lawfull wife, and do oblige my ſelf to be a dutiful husband: the woman is oblieged on the other part, to expreſs her conſent, and to ſay, Even ſo I take thee to be my lawful husband, and do promiſe duty and ſubjection: It is ſo here;

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the Lord ſaith I betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt call me *Iſhi*, my husband, *Hoſea* 2. I will be for thee as a head and husband if thou wilt not be for another, *Hoſea* 3. the man ought to anſwer, and ſay, *Amen*, So be it, Thou ſhalt be my God, my head, and Lord and I ſhall and will be thine, and not for another, *Cant.* 6. 3. And ſo this making of this Covenant with God, is called, a giving of the hand to him, as the word is 2 *Chron* 30. 8. which doth hint a very expreſs, formal, explicite and poſitive bargaining with God. So then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approved practice, neceſſary for the quieting of a mans mind, and his more comfortable being in Covenant with God, and more fully anſwering Gods condeſcendency and offer in that great and primary promiſe. *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.*

Not onely may, and ſhould people thus expreſly cloſe with God in Chriſt for fixing their heart; but they may, upon ſome occaſions, renew this verbal tranſaction with God; eſpecially, when through tentations they are made to queſtion if ever they have really and ſincerely cloſed Covenant with God, as they are to put out new acts of faith, embracing Chriſt as the deſireable portion and treaſure, and alſo upon other occaſions, ſo were it expedient eſpecially, if there remain any doubt about the thing, that by

by *viva voce* and expreſs word, they determine that controverſie, and ſay of the Lord and to him, that he is their refuge and portion, *Pſalm* 91. 2. *Pſalm* 142. We find the Saints doing ſo; and we may imitate them, eſpecially, 1. In the time of great backſliding, people were wont to renew the Covenant with God, and we ſhould do ſo alſo; our heart ſhould go out after Chriſt, in the promiſes of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace upon all occaſions, and our advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him ſo when we tranſgreſs, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. and to expreſs ſo much by word as Saints did in their formal renewing of the Covenant. 2. When people are in hazzard, then it were good that they ſhould ſend out their heart after him, and expreſs their adhering unto him, for ſecuring their own heart; we find *Joſhua* doing ſo, when he was to ſettle in the land of *Canaan*, in the midſt of ſnares, *Joſh.* 24. ſo *David* doth in his ſtraits, *Pſal.* 57. 1. 3. When men apprehend God to be at a diſtance from them, and their ſoul to be under withering and decay, then it is ſafeſt heartily to cloſe with Chriſt, and embrace him by faith for ſecuring of the ſoul, and it were good to put it out of queſtion, by the expreſſion of the thing; this is the ready way to draw ſap from Chriſt the root, for recovering of the ſoul, and for eſtabliſhing the heart before him. The Spouſe in the Song of *Solomon* doth ſo, thus aſſerting her intereſt in him, when in ſuch a con-

condition; profeſſing and a vowing him to be her beloved, *Cant.* 5. 4. At the celebration of the Lords Supper, men ſhould thus cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt, and ſpeak and expreſs ſo much; for, that is a feaſt of love, and then, and there we come under a ſolemn profeſſion of cloſing with God in Chriſt, perſonally and openly, and do receive the ſeal of it: it is therefore beſeeming, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to ſecond and anſwer our profeſſion, apprehending God to be our God, and reſigning over our ſelves to be his, and at his diſpoſing; we ſhall not confine the Lords people to times and ſeaſons of this duty; the Lord may bind it upon them at his pleaſure; onely there is hazzard, that by too frequent expreſs covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it; therefore, it is not ſo fit that people ſhould cordially at full length renew that explicite tranſaction with God, but rather to declare unto God, that they adhere unto the Covenant made with him, and that they do maintain and will never revoke nor recal the ſame; and withall, they may hint the ſum of it, in laying claim unto God in Chriſt, as their own God; and this they may do often, even in all their addreſſes to God, and probably this is the thing deſigned by the Saints in their ſo ordinary practice in the Scripture, whilſt they aſſert their intereſt in God, as their God and portion; and it is fit that men in all their walk, hold their

heart

heart at the buſineſs, by heart-cleaving to God in Chriſt, *The life we live in the fleſh, ſhould be by faith in the Son of God, Gal.* 2. 20.

As to the ſecond thing, *viz.* what is preparatorily required of him who is expreſly to tranſact with God. Here beſides what we ſpake before as previous to a mans cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, we onely add, 1. That he that would explicitely bargain with God, muſt know, that to do ſo, is warranted and allowed by God, as we ſhewed before: if this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith, and ſo it will be ſin unto him, *Rom.* 14. 23. 2. The man muſt labour to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belye the tongue; it will be a great mocking of God, ſo to draw near him with the lips, whilſt the heart is far off from him, *Iſa.* 29. 13.

The *third* thing to be conſidered in this expreſs verbal covenanting with God, is the way how it is to be performed and managed; and beſide what was ſaid before in heart-cloſing with Chriſt, I add here, 1. The man ſhould do it confidently, not onely beleiving that he is about his duty when he doth it; but alſo, that God in Chriſt Jeſus will accept his poor impetfect way of doing this duty; he doth accept a man according to what he hath, if there be a willing mind, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. a mite is accepted, ſince it is all the poor womans ſubſtance, *Mark.* 12. 44. yea if it can be attained, the man ſhould believe that the

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iſſue and conſequence of this tranſacting ſhall prove comfortable, and all ſhall be well, and that God, who engageth for all in the Covenant (ſince he hath determined the man to this happy choice) will in ſome meaſure make him forthcoming, and will perfect what concerns him; *Faithful is he who hath promiſed, who will alſo do it*, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 24. If this confidence be wanting, the matter will be done with much fear and jealouſie, if not worſe, and will ſtill prove a diſquieting buſineſs to the man. 2. It ſhould be done *holily*: It is called the *Holy Covenant*, Luke 1. 72. *The holy things of David*, Act. 13. 34. Here it were fitting, that what is done in this expreſs tranſacting with God, ſhould not be done paſſingly, and on the by, but in ſome ſpecial addreſſes unto God; the thing ſhould be ſpoken unto the Lord, *Pſal.* 142. 5. It is beſeeming in ſo great a buſineſs that a piece of time were ſet apart for confeſſion and ſupplication before God: yea, alſo the perſon ſo tranſacting with God, ſhould labour to have high apprehenſions of Gods greatneſs and ſoveraignty, 2 *Sam.* 7. 22. although he thus humble himſelf to behold things in Heaven and Earth, and theſe high and holy thoughts of him, will and ſhould be attended with debaſing and humbling thoughts of ſelf, although admitted to this high dignity, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. It is no ſmall thing to be allyed unto, and with the great God of Heaven, and his Son Chriſt, as *David* ſpeaketh

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when King *Saul* did offer his daughter unto him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 22. Yea, further, there ſhould be ſpecial guarding and watching, that the heart keep ſpiritual in tranſacting with God; there is great reaſon for this holy way of performing the duty; for, men are ready to forget themſelves, and to ſhape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the buſineſs, ſince it is a marriage tranſaction held out in all the ordinary expreſſions of love, as in the Song of *Solomon*, *Iſa.* 62. 5. Zeph. 3. 17.

The fourth thing we ſhall ſpeak a word unto, is, what ſhould follow upon this expreſs verbal Covenanting with God; I ſay, beſide that union and communion with God in Chriſt, following upon beleiving, if a man explicitely by word tranſact with God, 1. he ſhould thenceforth be ſingularly careful to abide cloſe by God in all manner of converſation; for if a man thenceforth do any thing unſuitable, he doth falſifie his word before God, which will ſtick much in his conſcience, and prove a ſnare; If a man henceforth forget God, and take on him to diſpoſe of himſelf, ſince he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, he makes enquiry after vows, and devoureth that which is holy, *Pro.* 20. 25. 2. He who ſo tranſacteth with God, ſhould hold ſteadfaſt that determination and concluſion; it is a ſhame for

for a man, whose heart hath closed with God, and whose mouth hath ratified and confirmed it solemnly before him, to contradict himself again, and to admit any thing to the contrary, he ought boldly to maintain the thing against all deadly.

Then let me obtest you who desire to be established in the matter of your interest in God, that with all conveniency you set apart a piece of time for Prayer before God, and labouring to work up your heart to seriousness, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a Covenant, and to transact with God by express words after this manner.

O *Lord, I am a lost and broken Creature by Nature, and by innumerable actual transgressions which I do confess particularly before thee this day; and although, being born within the visible Church, I was from the womb in Covenant with thee, and had the same sealed unto me in baptism, yet for a long time I have liv'd without God in the world, senseless and ignorant of my Obligation, by vertue of that Covenant. Thou hast (at length) discovered unto me, and bound upon my heart, my miserable state in my self, and hast made manifest unto my*

heart the ſatisfying relief thou haſt provided by Chriſt Jeſus, offering the ſame freely unto me, upon condition that I would accept of the ſame, and would cloſe with thee as my God in Chriſt, warranting and commanding me upon my utmoſt peril, to accept of this offer, and to flee unto Chriſt Jeſus: yea, to my apprehenſion, now thou haſt Soveraignly determined my heart, and ſhaped it for Chriſt Jeſus, leading it out after him in the offer of the Goſpel, cauſing me to approach unto the living God, to cloſe ſo with him, and to acquieſce in his offer, without any known guile; And that I may come up to that eſtabliſhment of Spirit in this matter, which ſhould be to my comfort, and the praiſe of thy glorious Grace; Therefore, I am here this day to put this matter out of queſtion, by expreſs words before thee, according to thy will: And now I, unworthy as I am, do declare, that I believe, that Chriſt Jeſus, who was ſlain at Jeruſalem, *was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World; I do believe that*

record,

record, that there is life eternal for men in him, and in him onely; I do this day in my heart, plead and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners by him, and do intrust my soul unto him; I do accept of reconciliation with God through him, and do close with thee as my God in him; I chuse him in all that he is, and all that may follow him, and do resign up my self, and what I am, or have, unto thee, desiring to be divorced from every thing hatefull unto thee, and that without exception, or reservation of any thing (consistent with my knowledge) or intended reversion; here I give the hand to thee, and do take all things about me witnesses, that I, whatever I be, or have hitherto been, do accept of Gods offer of peace through Christ, and do make a sure Covenant with thee this day never to be reversed, hoping that thou wilt make all things forth-coming, both on thy part and mine, seriously begging (as I desire to be saved) that my corruptions may be subdued, and my Neck brought unto thy sweet yoke in all

things, and my heart made chearfully to acquiesce in whatsoever thou dost unto me, or with me, in order to these ends. Now, glory be unto thee, O Father, who devised such a Salvation, and gave the Son to accomplish it; Glory be to Christ Jesus, who at so dear a rate, did purchase the out-letting of that love from the Fathers bosome, and through whom alone this access is granted, and in whom I am reconciled unto God, and honourably united unto him, and am no more an Enemy or Stranger: Glory to the Holy Ghost, who did alarm me when I was destroying my self; and who did not onely convince me of my hazzard, but did also open my eyes to behold the relief provided in Christ; yea, and did perswade and determine my wild heart to fall in love with Christ, as the enriching treasure; and this day doth teach me how to Covenant with God, and how to impropriate to my self all the sure Mercies of David, and blessing of Abraham, and to secure to my self the favour and friendship of God for ever. Now with

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my soul, heart, head and whole man, as I can, I do acquiesce in my choice this day, henceforth resolving not to be my own, but thine; and that the care of whatsoever concerns me shall be on thee, as my Head and Lord, protesting humbly that failings on my part, (against which I resolve, thou knowest) shall not make void this Covenant; for so hast thou said, which I intend not to abuse, but so much the more to cleave close unto thee, and I must have liberty to renew, ratifie, and draw extracts of this transaction, as often as shall be found needfull. Now I know thy consent to this bargain, standeth recorded in Scripture, so as I need no new signification of it; and I, having accepted of thy offer upon thy own terms, will henceforth wait for what is good, and for thy salvation in the end; as thou art faithful, pardon what is amiss in my way of doing the thing, and accept me in my sweet Lord Jesus, in whom I onely desire pardon; and in testimony hereof, I set to my Seal, that God is True, in declaring him a competent Saviour.

Let People Covenant with God in fewer or more words, as the Lord ſhall diſpoſe them; for we intend no plat-form of words for any perſon; onely it were fitting that men ſhould, before the Lord, acknowledge their loſt ſtate in themſelves, and the relief that is by Chriſt, and that they do declare that they accept of the ſame, as it is offered in the Goſpel, and do thankfully reſt ſatisfied with it, intruſting themſelves henceforth wholly unto God to be ſaved in his way, for which they according to his faithfulneſs. If men would heartily and ſincerely do this, it might heartily through the Lords bleſſing, help to eſtabliſh them againſt many fears and jealouſies; and they might date ſome good thing from this day and hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the dark afterwards, and even when many failings do ſtare them in the face perhaps at the hour of death, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. It is much if a man can appeal unto God, and ſay, Thou knoweſt there was a day and an hour, when in ſuch a place I did accept of peace through Chriſt, and did deliver up my heart to thee, to write on it thy whole Law without exception; heaven and earth are witneſſes of it: Remember thy word unto thy Servant, on which thou cauſedſt me to hope.

Object. *I dare not adventure to ſpeak ſuch words unto God, becauſe I finde not my heart coming up full length in Affection and Seriouſneſſe: So, I ſhould but lye unto God, in tranſacting ſo with him.*

Anſw.

Anſw. It is to be regrated that mens heart doth not with much benſail of Deſire and Affection embrace and welcome that bleſſed offer and portion: Yet for anſwer to the objection, remember, 1. That thoſe to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Chriſt in them, the whole heart is not renewed; there is Fleſh and Spirit luſting againſt each other, the one contrary unto the other, ſo as a man can neither do the good or evil he would do with full benſail, *Gal.* 5. 17. It is well if there be a good part of the heart going out after Chriſt, deſiring to cloſe with him on his own tearms. 2. That there is often a rational love in the heart unto Chriſt Jeſus, expreſſing it ſelf by a reſpect to his Commandements, 1 *John* 5. 3. when there is not a ſenſible prevailing love which maketh the ſoul ſick, *Can.* 2. 5. Men muſt not alwayes expect to find this. I ſay then, although ſomewhat in your heart draw back, yet if you can ſay, you are convinced of your broken ſtate without him, you want a righteouſneſs to cover your guilt, and you want ſtrength to ſtand out againſt ſin, or to do what is pleaſing before God: You alſo ſee fulneſs in him in both theſe reſpects; you dare ſay ſomewhat, within your heart, would be fain at him upon his own terms, and would have both Righteouſneſſe for Juſtification, and ſtrength in order to Sanctification; and what is within you contradicting this; is you burthen, in ſome meaſure, and your bondage. If it be ſo,

your heart is brought up a tolerable length; go on to the business, and determine the matter by covenanting with God, and say with your mouth, *that you have both Righteousnesse and Strength in God, as he hath sworn you shall do, Isa.* 45. 24. It is approved Divinity to say unto God, *I believe*, when much misbelief is in me, and the heart divided in the case, *Mark* 9. 24. Withall, shew unto God, how matters are in your heart, that so you may be without guile before him, concealing nothing from him, and put your heart, as it is in his hand to write his Law on it, according to the Covenant; for that is the thing he seeketh of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he may stamp it with his whole Will, without exception; and if you can heartily consent unto that, judging Christs blood a sufficient ransome and satisfaction for Mans Transgression, you may go and expressly strike Covenant with God; for your Heart and Affection is already engaged.

Object. *I dare not so Covenant with God, least I break to him; Yea, I perswade my self, that if such a tentation did offer so and so circumstantiate, I should fall before it, and succumb. Therefore to transact so with God, whilst I foresee such a thing, were but to aggredge my condemnation.*

Answ. 1. You have already entred Covenant with God, as you are a member of his visible Church; and what is now prest upon you, is, but

but that you more heartily, ſincerely, particularly, and more expreſly covenant and tranſact with him; you are already obliged heartily to cloſe with God in Chriſt; and, if you do it in heart, I hope the hazzard is no greater by ſaying that you do ſo, or have done ſo. 2. What will you do if you ſhift hearty tranſacting with God in Chriſt, and do not accept his peace, as it is offered? You have not a ſecond of it in the World; either you muſt do this, or periſh for ever: And if you do it with your heart, you may alſo ſay it with your tongue. 3. If people may ſcare at Covenanting with God, becauſe they will afterwards Tranſgreſſe, then not one man ſhould Covenant with God; for ſurely every one will tranſgreſs afterwards, if they live any length of time after the tranſaction; and we know no way like this, to ſecure men from falling: For if you Covenant honeſtly with him, he engageth, beſide *the new heart*, to put his *fear and Law therein; to give his Spirit to cauſe you to walk in his way*: And when you Covenant with God, you deliver up your ſelf unto him, to be ſanctified and made conform to his will; it is rather a giving up of your ſelf to be led in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, then any formal engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil. So that you need not ſcar at the Covenant, the Language whereof is, *Wilt thou not be made clean? Jer.* 13. 27. And all that

ſhun

ſhun to ſtrike Covenant with God, do thereby declare, that they deſire not to be made clean. 4. As it is hard for any to ſay confidently, they will tranſgreſſe, if ſuch a tentation did offer ſo and ſo circumſtantiate; becauſe men may think, that either God will keep a tentation out of their way, or not *ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear*, or give to them a way of eſcape, *Pſal.*46.1. 1 *Cor.*10.13. So the queſtion is not, What I may do afterwards, but, What I now reſolve to do. If my heart charge me preſently with any deceit or reſolution to tranſgreſſe, I muſt lay aſide that deceit before I tranſact with God: But if my heart charge me with no ſuch purpoſe, yea, I dare ſay, I reſolve againſt every tranſgreſſion; and although I think I ſhall fall before ſuch and ſuce a tentation, yet that thought floweth not from any allowed, and approved reſolution to do ſo; but from knowledge of my own corruption, and of what I have done to provoke God to deſert me. But the Lord knows, I reſolve not to Tranſgreſſe, nor do I approve any ſecret inclination of my heart to ſuch a ſin, but would reckon it my ſingular mercy to be kept from ſin in ſuch a caſe; and I judge my ſelf a wretched man, becauſe of ſuch a body of death within me, which doth threaten to make me tranſgreſs. In that caſe, I ſay, my heart doth not condemn me, *therefore I may, and ought to have confidence before God*, 1 *Joh.*3.21. If this then be the caſe,

case, I say to thee, although thou shouldest afterwards fail many wayes, and so perhaps draw upon thy self sad temporal strokes thereby, *And loose for a season many expressions of his Love, yet there is an Advocate with the Father to plead thy pardon,* 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *Who hath satisfied for our breaches,* *Isa.* 53. 5, 6. and for his sake, God resolveth to hold fast the Covenant with men after their transgression, *Psal.* 89. 30, 37. else how could he be said to *betroth himself to us for ever? Hos.* 2. 19, 20. and how could the Covenant be called *Everlasting, ordered in all things and sure,* if there were not ground of comfort in it, even when our house is not so and so with God? 2 *Sam.* 23. 25. Yea, it were no better then the Covenant of Works, if those who enter it with God, could so depart from him again, as to make it void unto themselves, and to put themselves into a worse condition then they were in before they made it, *Jer.* 32. 40. compared with *Heb.* 8. 6. The Lord hateth putting away, *Mal.* 2. 16. No honest heart will stumble on this, but will rather be strengthned thereby in duty, *Hos.* 14. 9. For other ties and bonds, beside divorce, and punishment by death, do oblige the ingenuous wife unto duty. So here men will *fear the Lord and his Goodness,* Hos. 3. 5.

Object. *I have at the celebration of the Lords Supper, and at some other occasions, covenanted expresly and verbally with God; but my fruitlesness in his ways, and the renewed jealousies of my gracious state,*

maketh

maketh me question if ever I transacted with God in sincerity, and I think I can do it no otherwayes then I have done it.

Answ. 1. Men are not to expect fruitfulness according to their desire, nor full assurance of Gods Favour, immediately after they have fled unto Christ, and expresly transacted with God in him. These things will keep a man on work all his dayes: The Saints had their failings and short-comings, yea, and back-slidings, with many fits of dangerous mis-belief, after they had very seriously, and sincerely, and expresly closed with God, as their God in Christ. 2. Many do look for faithfulness in their walk and establishment of faith, from their own sincerity in transacting with God, rather then from the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. They rest their heart in their own honesty and resolutions, and not in the Blessed Root Christ Jesus, without whom we can do nothing, and are vanity altogether in our best estate. Men should remember, that one piece of grace cannot produce any degree of grace further, nothing can work grace but the arm of Jehovah: And if men would lean unto Christ, and covenant with him as their duty absolutely, whatsoever may be the consequence, at least, looking onely to him for the suitable fruit, it should be far better with them: God pleaseth not that men should betake themselves unto Christ, and covenant with him for a season, untill they see if such and such fruit and establishment

bliſhment ſhall follow, purpoſing to diſclaim their intereſt in him, and the Covenant, if ſuch and ſuch fruit doth not appear within ſuch a length of time. This is to put the wayes of God to tryal, and is very diſpleaſing unto him: Men muſt abſolutely cloſe with Chriſt, and covenant with him, reſolving to maintain theſe things as their duty, and a ready way to reach fruit, whatſoever ſhall follow thereupon, they having a teſtimony within them, that they ſeriouſly deſign conformity to his revealed will in all things; and they that have cloſed Covenant with him for the ſame end, as well as to be ſaved thereby. 3. Men ſhould be ſparing to bring in queſtion their ſincerity in tranſacting with God, unleſſe they can inſtruct the ſame, or have great preſumptions for it. If you can inſtruct any deceit or guile in your tranſacting with him, your are obliged to diſclaim and rectifie it, and to tranſact with God honeſtly, and without guile: But if you know nothing of your deceit or guile, in the day you did tranſact with him; yea, you can ſay, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honeſtly with him, and intended not to deceive; and did obteſt him according to his faithfulneſſe, to ſearch and try if there was any crookedneſſe in your way, and to diſcover it unto you, and heal it, *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. and afterwards you came to the Light, that your deeds might be manifeſt, *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. and you can ſay, that Gods anſwers from his Word to

you

you, in ſo far as you could underſtand, were anſwers of peace, and confirmations of your ſincerity; Yea, further, you dare ſay, that if upon life and death, you were again to tranſact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intending more ſincerity and ſeriouſneſs then before: Then I dare ſay unto thee in the Lords name, thou oughteſt not to queſtion thy ſincerity in tranſacting with God, but to have confidence before God, ſince thy heart doth not condemn thee, 1 *John.* 3. 21. and thou art bound to believe that God dealeth uprightly with the upright man, *and with the pure doth ſhew himſelf pure*, *Pſal.* 18. 25, 26. If a man intend honeſtly, God will not ſuffer him to beguile himſelf, yea, the Lord ſuffereth no man to deceive himſelf, unleſſe the man intend to deceive both God and Men. 4. Therefore, impute your unfruitfulneſs to your unwatchfulneſs, and your misbelief; and impute your want of full aſſurance, unto an evil heart of unbelief, helped by Satan to act againſt the glorious free grace of God; and charge not theſe things upon want of ſincerity in your cloſing with Chriſt; And reſolve henceforth to abide cloſe by the root, and you ſhall bring forth more Fruit; and by much Fruit you lay your ſelf open to the witneſſe of Gods Spirit, which will teſtifie with your Spirit, that you have ſincerely and honeſtly cloſed with God, and that the reſt of your works are wrought in God, and approved of him; and ſo the witneſs of the Spirit

and

and the Water, joyning with the blood, whereupon you are to lay the weight of your Soul and Conſcience; and where alone you are to ſink the curſes of the Law, due unto you for all your ſins and failings in your beſt things. Theſe three do agree in one; *viz.* That this is the way of life, and peace, and that you have intereſt therein, and ſo you come to quietneſſe and full aſſurance, *John* 15.4,5. and 14.21,23. *Rom.*8.16. 1 *John* 5.1.

O bleſſed bargain of the New Covenant, and thrice bleſſed Mediator of the ſame! Let him ride proſperouſly, and ſubdue Nations and Languages, and gather in all his Jewels, that honourable company of the firſt-born, and ſtately troop of Kings and Prieſts, whoſe glory it ſhall be to have waſhed their garments in the blood of that ſpotleſs Lamb; and whoſe happineſs ſhall continually flouriſh in following him whitherſoever he goeth; and in being in the immediate company of the Ancient of dayes, one ſight of whoſe face ſhall make them in a manner forget that ever they were on the Earth. O if I could perſwade men to believe, that theſe things are not yea and nay, and to make haſt towards him, who haſteth to judge the World, and to call men to an account, eſpecially about the improvement of this Goſpel! *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus.*

The

The whole Treatiſe reſumed in a few *Queſtions* and *Anſwers*.

Queſt.

WHat is the great buſineſs a man hath to do in the World?

Anſw. To make ſure a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt Jeſus, and to walk ſuitably thereunto.

Queſt. 2. *Have not all the members of the viſible Church a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt?*

Anſw. No verily; yea, but a very few of them have it.

Queſt. 3. *How ſhall I know, if I have a Saving Intereſt in him?*

Anſw. Ordinarily the Lord prepareth his own way in the Soul, by a work of Humiliation, and diſcovereth a mans ſin and miſery to him, and exerciſeth him ſo therewith, that he longs for the Phyſitian Chriſt Jeſus.

Queſt. 4. *How ſhall I know if I have got a competent diſcovery of my ſin and miſery.*

Anſw.

Anſw. A competent ſight of it, maketh a man take Salvation to heart above any thing in this World: it maketh him diſclaim all relief in himſelf, even in his beſt things: It maketh Chriſt, who is the Redeemer, very precious to the ſoul: It maketh a man ſtand in awe to ſin afterwards, maketh him content to be ſaved upon any terms God pleaſeth.

Queſt. 5. *What other way may I diſcern a Saving Intereſt in him?*

Anſw. By the going out of my heart ſeriouſly and affectionately towards him, as he is held out in the Goſpel; and this is faith or believing.

Queſt. 6. *How ſhall I know if my heart goeth out after him aright, and that my faith is true Saving Faith?*

Anſw. Where the heart goeth out aright after him, in true and ſaving Faith, the ſoul pleaſeth Chriſt alone above all things, and pleaſeth him in all his three Offices, to rule and inſtruct, as well as to ſave; and is content to cleave unto him, whatſoever inconvenience may follow.

Queſt. 7. *What other mark of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt can you give to me?*

Anſw. He that is in Chriſt ſavingly, is a new Creature, he is graciouſly changed and renewed, in ſome meaſure, in the whole man, and in all his ways; pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Queſt. 8. *What if I find ſin now and then prevailing over me?*

Anſw. Although every ſin deſerveth everlaſting vengeance, yet if you be afflicted for your failings, confeſs then with ſhame of face unto God, reſolving to ſtrive againſt them honeſtly henceforth, and flee unto Chriſt for pardon, you obtain mercy, and your intereſt ſtands ſure.

Queſt. 9. *What ſhall the man do who cannot lay claim to Chriſt Jeſus, nor any of thoſe marks ſpoken of?*

Anſw. Let him not take reſt, until he make ſure unto himſelf a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt.

Queſt. 10. *What way can a man make ſure an intereſt in Chriſt, who never had a ſaving intereſt in him hitherto?*

Anſw. He muſt take his ſins to heart, and his great hazzard thereby, and he muſt take to heart Gods offer of pardon, and peace through Chriſt Jeſus, and heartily cloſe with Gods offer, by betaking himſelf unto Chriſt, the bleſſed refuge.

Queſt. 11. *What if my ſins be ſingularly heinous, and great beyond ordinary?*

Anſw. Whatſoever thy ſins be, if thou wilt cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus by faith, thou ſhalt never enter into condemnation.

Queſt. 12. *Is faith in Chriſt only required of me?*

Anſw. Faith is the only condition, upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men: But be aſſured, Faith, if it be true and ſaving, will not

ot be alone in the Soul, but will be attended ith true repentance, and a thankful ſtudy of conormity to Gods Image.

Queſt. 13. *How ſhall I be ſure that my heart doth ccept of Gods offer, and doth cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus?*

Anſw. Go make a Covenant expreſly, and by word ſpeak the thing unto God:

Queſt. 14. *What way ſhall I do that?*

Anſw. Set apart ſome bit of time, and having conſidered your own loſt eſtate, and the relief offered by Chriſt Jeſus, work up your heart to pleaſe and cloſe with that offer, and ſay unto God expreſly, that you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Chriſt; and do give up your ſelf to him to be ſaved in his way, without reſervation or exception in any caſe; and that you henceforth will wait for ſalvation in the way he hath appointed.

Queſt. 15. *What if I break unto God afterwards?*

Anſw. You muſt reſolve on his ſtrength not to break, and watch over your own way, and put your heart in his hands to keep it: And if you break, you muſt confeſſe it unto God, and judge your ſelf for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, and reſolve to do no more ſo: and this you muſt do as often as you fail.

Queſt. 16. *How ſhall I come to full aſſurance of my intereſt in Chriſt, ſo as it may be above controverſie?*

Anſw. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Chriſt, and ſtudy purity and holineſſe in all manner

manner of converſation, and pray for the witneſſ of Gods Spirit to joyn with the blood and the wa ter; and his Teſtimony added unto theſe, wil eſtabliſh you in the faith of, and Intereſt in Chriſt.

Queſt. 17. *What is the conſequence of ſuch cloſing with God in Chriſt by heart and mouth?*

Anſw. Union and communion with God; all good here, and his bleſſed fellowſhip in Heaven for ever afterwards.

Queſt. 17. *What if I ſlight all theſe things, and not lay them to heart, to put them in practice?*

Anſw. The Lord cometh with his Angels in flaming fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not this Goſpel; and thy judgement ſhall be greater then the judgement of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and ſo much the greater that thou haſt read this Treatiſe: for, it ſhall be a witneſs againſt thee in that day.

FINIS.

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ERRATA.

WHere you meet with this Phraſe, *If ye can plead the device, &c.* Read, *If ye can pleaſe —— i. e.* If ye be pleaſed with the device, or way which God hath found out for Saving Sinners.